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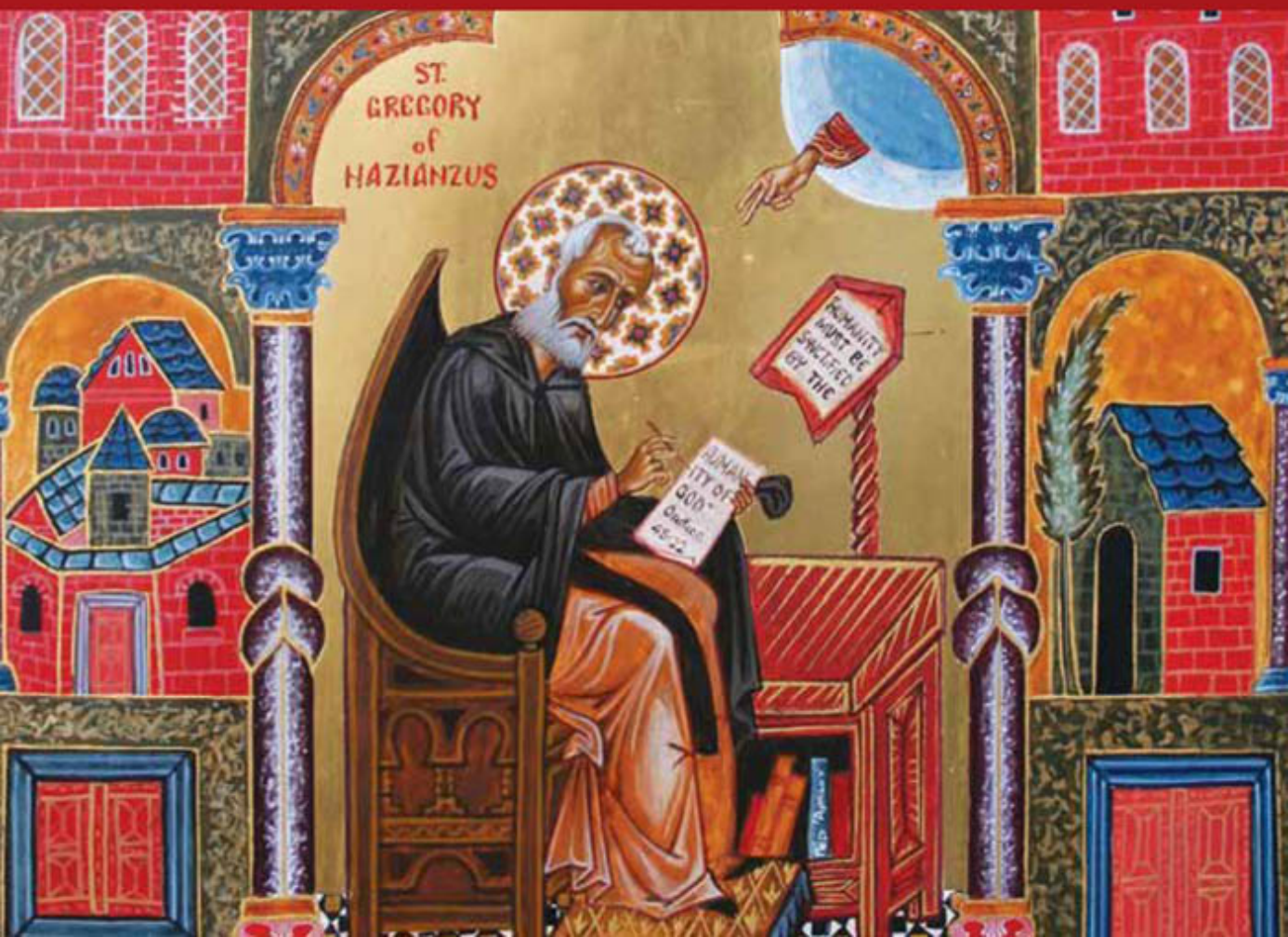

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ANDREW HOFER, O.P.

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Andrew Hofer, O.P.
Dominican House of Studies, Washington, DC

Easter 2013

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Contents

Abbreviations xi

Introduction 1

1. Gregory's Theology of the Word 11
Gregory's genres—the Word in classical styles 14
The purifying Word in life through philosophy and rhetoric 24
The scriptural Word proclaiming life 35
The Word between Trinitarian and Christological readings of Scripture 45
Conclusion 53

2. Gregory's Christomorphic Autobiography 55
The distinctively autobiographical quality of Gregory's writings 57
Christ in Gregory's autobiographical poetry 68
A didactic epic of Christomorphic autobiography 77
Conclusion 89

3. Autobiographical Christology I: The Mixtures of Gregory and Christ 91
Mixture as Gregory's approach to the mystery of the Incarnation 93
Philosophical background for Gregory's mixture language 96
The mixture of Gregory's human life 106
Christ as the "New Mixture" for Gregory's salvation 110
The human mind's mediation in the Incarnation 114
Multiplicity and unity 117
Conclusion 119

4. Autobiographical Christology II: *Ep*. 101 in the Christological Controversy 123
Ep. 101 in Gregory's rhetorical context 125
The anathemas 131
Gregory's salvation after the anathemas 147
Conclusion 150

5. Autobiographical Christology III: The Mysteries of Christ 153
Gregory's festal spirituality in context 156
The Epiphany Mysteries 161
The Stonings 175
The Paschal Mysteries 181
Conclusion 191

6. Gregory's Christomorphic Ministry 195
Christ in the ordained ministry of *Or.* 2 199
Christ in the models of ordained ministry 204
Christ in the anti-models of ordained ministry 209
Christ in Gregory's ministry concerning marriage and virginity 213
Christ in Gregory's ministry concerning the rich and the poor 220
Conclusion 224

Epilogue 227

Bibliography 229
Works of Gregory of Nazianzus Index 249
Subject Index 256

Abbreviations

ACO	*Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*
Carm.	*Carmen* (Poem)
Ep.	*Epistula* (Letter)
LXX	Septuagint
Or.	*Oratio* (Oration)
PG	*Patrologia cursus completus, series Graeca*
PL	*Patrologia cursus completus, series Latina*
SC	*Sources Chrétiennes*

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Introduction

The life of Gregory of Nazianzus (*c*.329–*c*.390) stands at an intellectual crossroads.[1] He was born a few years after the Council of Nicaea I (325), and he died a few years after the Council of Constantinople I (381). This period was perhaps the most formative for Christian doctrine after the writing of the New Testament. It was a time when Christians emerged from the persecutions that had been waged at the beginning of the fourth century to find their religion legalized and championed in the Empire. It was also a time of fierce dogmatic disputes among the Christians themselves, including Emperors, about the most important matters of the faith. Gregory did not only witness this turning point in Christian history, but with his intellectual gifts, he contributed decisively to the way that Christians in successive generations would think about the divine mysteries.

He came from the province of Cappadocia, what is now just to the east of Turkey's center. This rugged land saw the rise of two other outstanding intellectuals who, with Gregory, would have special prominence for orthodox Christianity: Basil of Caesarea, whom Gregory claimed to be his best friend, and Basil's younger brother Gregory of Nyssa. Modern scholars group these three as "the Cappadocian Fathers," and since the twentieth century a trend has privileged Gregory of Nyssa over the more traditionally authoritative

[1] The most complete biographical overview of Gregory is John A. McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001). Older biographies and theological surveys of interest include Paul Gallay, *La Vie de saint Grégoire de Nazianze* (Paris: E. Vitte, 1943), Jean Plagnieux, *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze Théologien* (Paris: Éditions Franciscaines, 1948), and Jean Bernardi, *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze: Le Théologien et son temps (330–390)*, Initiations aux Pères de l'Église (Paris: Cerf, 1995). For the most informative survey of Gregory's theology, see Christopher A. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God: In Your Light We See Light*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). For Gregory's life and work, see Beeley's introduction in pp. 3–62. Also, see the incisive introduction in Brian E. Daley, S.J, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, Early Church Fathers (London: Routledge, 2006), 1–61. For the magisterial comparison of the lives of Gregory of Nazianzus and the Emperor he so much opposed, see Susanna Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church: Emperor Julian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Vision of Rome*, Transformations of the Classical Heritage 49 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012).

Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil.[2] The Greek tradition has called Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil, and John Chrysostom the "Three Holy Hierarchs" since the eleventh century. Meanwhile, the Latin tradition since the sixteenth century celebrates those three, with Athanasius, as the first four named Greek doctors of the universal Church.[3] Many today do not have a sense of why Gregory of Nazianzus was considered among the most influential Christian thinkers of all time, and even with a unique status.[4] Byzantine ecclesiastical literature probably cites his writings more frequently than any other authority after the Bible.[5] Of all the Greek Fathers of the early Church, he is the only one to merit being called "the Theologian."[6] The first record of Gregory being called "the Theologian" comes at the Council of Chalcedon (451), about six decades after his death, and has been repeated in successive generations.

Gregory became especially known for his theology of the Trinity, and with good reason. Gregory's Trinitarian theology can be said to trump an ecumenical council and its creed.[7] When Gregory presided over Constantinople I for a time, the bishops did not incorporate into their creed his teaching that the the Holy Spirit should be called "God." Christians today reciting that Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed commonly speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in shorthand fashion, as each God, but affirm there is only one God. Gregory's Trinitarian theology provides a powerful corrective to what the creed lacks.

However, Gregory appears first as "the Theologian" not because of his teaching on the Trinity or on the divinity of the Holy Spirit, but rather because

[2] For example, Quasten writes what he considers to be obvious: "If we compare Gregory of Nyssa as a theologian with the two other Cappadocians, Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus, we recognize his superiority immediately." Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 3: *The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature: From the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Chalcedon* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1960), 283.

[3] Pope Pius V named these four Greek doctors in 1568, providing an eastern balance to the four from the West named in the thirteenth century: Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory I. For a telling reference to our Gregory's reputation in the West, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 61, a. 3.

[4] For a brief assessment of Gregory's standing in scholarship, see Christopher A. Beeley, "Gregory of Nazianzus: Past, Present, and Future," in *Re-reading Gregory of Nazianzus: Essays on History, Theology, and Culture*, ed. Christopher A. Beeley, CUA Studies in Early Christianity (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), ix–xiii. Beeley writes of a recent revolution that addresses the scholarly neglect of Gregory's corpus.

[5] Jacques Noret, "Grégoire de Nazianze, l'auteur le plus cité après la Bible, dans la literature ecclésiastique byzantine," in *II. Symposium Nazianzenum (Louvain-la-Neuve, 25–28 août, 1981): Actes du Colloque International*, ed. Justin Mossay, Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums, Neue Folge 2. Forschungen zu Gregor von Nazianz (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1983), 259–66.

[6] Gregory shares the title "the Theologian" with John the Evangelist. Much later, the late tenth/early eleventh-century Symeon received a similar honor as "the New Theologian."

[7] McGuckin closes his study with this line about Gregory: "He would have been triumphant to have seen how his theological writings would eventually correct even an ecumenical council itself, so as to become the standard of subsequent Christian orthodoxy." See McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 402.

of his teaching on Christ. In a florilegium appended to Chalcedon's "Address to the Emperor Marcian," brief quotations are given from several Fathers. The Council took two excerpts from "Blessed Gregory the Theologian." The first gives a line from Gregory's first *Theological Epistle* to Cledonius: "For there are two natures, God and human, since there are also soul and body, but there are neither two Sons nor Gods."[8] The second is from a *Theological Oration* on the Son: "And this is what makes heretics err—the joining of names. And a sign of this is that when the natures are separated in thought the names also are distinguished."[9] In both cases, Gregory's words are marshaled to support Chalcedon's teaching in Christ's two natures. It is in the midst of a precisely Christological controversy that we first meet Gregory as "the Theologian." Moreover, the very ecumenical Council where we first see Gregory called "the Theologian" condemned the language of blending (*krasis*), frequently used by Gregory, to describe the Incarnation.[10]

Chalcedon's reliance on Gregory appears within competing claims for Gregory's authority in Christology. A wide range of texts in the fifth-century controversies—as diverse as those of rivals Cyril of Alexandria and John of Antioch,[11] Cyril's archenemy Nestorius,[12] Cyril's successor in Alexandria, Dioscorus,[13] and the florilegium to the Greek version of Leo's tome[14]—all claim Gregory's support. Gregory's eminent authority among opponents in those Christological controversies continues in succeeding centuries.[15] His

[8] *Ep*. 101.5(19); ACO II.1.3 (p. 473). In citing *Ep*. 101 and 102, I give the number for the textual divisions from the SC 208 critical edition after the number more traditionally given. When I use a translation made by another, that information is cited in abbreviated form immediately after the citation of the text. When I alter another's translation, (alt.) appears after the citation. At times, additional notations are given to indicate matters of editions, translations, and interpretations.

[9] *Or*. 30.8; ACO II.1.3 (p. 473).

[10] ACO 2.1.2.34 (p. 324). Throughout this book, I give the Greek font for direct quotations from Gregory's texts, but transliterations for Greek terms and phrases.

[11] For Cyril's reaction to John in interpreting Gregory and other Fathers, see his *Ep*. 67; cf. *Ep*. 68 and 69.

[12] For claims of support from Athanasius, Ambrose, and Gregory of Nazianzus, see Nestorius, *Bazaar of Heracleides* 2.1; trans. G. R. Driver and Leonard Hodgson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), 191–94; 199–200; 215–16; 221–24; 227; 236; 255–56; 260–62; and 333. The three are mentioned singly in other places as well. For example, Nestorius asks, "And you also, O Gregory the divine, what then [do you say]? What opinion do you have concerning these things? I ask, not that I know not, but because in your own name they desire to crush the truth." See *Bazaar of Heracleides* 2.1; trans. Driver and Hodgson, 200 (alt.).

[13] ACO II.1.1.290 (p. 117).

[14] Schwartz identifies the two passages cited from Gregory's *Or*. 38 as a Greek version of Rufinus's Latin translation. See ACO II.1.1 (pp. 21–22). Cf. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, 3 vols., trans. Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, Translated Texts for Historians 45 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), 3.162.

[15] The seventh-century controversy on Christ's willing is just such an example. For the Monothelite appropriation of Gregory's *Or*. 30.12, see Demetrios Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of St. Maximus the Confessor*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 95 and 135–36. For examples of

Christology transcends certain debates, and attracts admirers from various traditions.

Gregory's Christology, especially its constant mixture language, is also a source of bewilderment for modern scholarship. The renowned twentieth-century scholar of patristic Christology, Aloys Grillmeier, S.J., exemplifies the state of academic research of his time.[16] Grillmeier's main interest in assessing Gregory centers on the consideration of Christ's two natures and the problem of unity. For Grillmeier, Gregory's Christology in this regard stands very incomplete and does not match the refinement he achieved in Trinitarian theology. Grillmeier identifies two failures of Cappadocian Christology: the use of Stoic concepts of mixture, which suggests the unity of Christ is on the level of nature, and the insufficient clarity about the relationship between substance and hypostasis. Grillmeier laments that this stage of Christology has neither its path, nor its goal, stated clearly. Furthermore, Grillmeier draws a dichotomy between Gregory's theology and spirituality by saying that Gregory's own inspiration for Christology comes "not so much from speculative theological reflection as from his spiritual disposition."[17]

This separation drawn by Grillmeier between theological reflection and spiritual disposition would have been foreign to Gregory's mind. The one renowned as "the Theologian" is also the most autobiographical of all the Greek Fathers of the early Church. He talks about himself—*a lot*. While Augustine's tendency to talk about himself in the midst of talking about God is well known, few beyond specialists know that Gregory undertook a continual literary reflection on his life. This lopsided evaluation may be due primarily to a lack of familiarity with Gregory's works. Modern scholarship has been slow in undertaking the task of looking at the full range of Gregory's writings, some of which still await critical editions and vernacular translations. We have extant from Gregory 44 orations, nearly 250 letters, and about 17,000 lines of poetry. The poetry, in particular, has suffered from neglect in theological scholarship. In calling Gregory his master who explained the Scriptures to him, Jerome attests to Gregory's prodigious verses.[18] Yet, not a single poem was translated into English in the influential nineteenth-century Post-Nicene Fathers series. Although as many as 99 of his poems have been termed for their subject "On himself," such classification does not do justice to the nearly constant self-reference in Gregory's poetry, an autobiographical reflection

interpreting Gregory on Christ's willing from the texts of Maximus, see *Opusc.* 3 (PG 91.48A–B), *Opusc.* 6 (PG 91.65C), *Opusc.* 7 (PG 91.81C–D).

[16] Aloys Grillmeier, S.J., *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 1: *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, trans. J. S. Bowden, 2d edn. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1975), 368–70.

[17] Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition* 1.370. Cf. Joseph Tixeront, *History of Dogmas*, vol. 2: *From St. Athanasius to St. Augustine (318–430)*, trans. Henry. L. Brianceau (St. Louis, MO: Herder, 1914), 127.

[18] *On Illustrious Men* 117.1 (PL 23.707).

seen also in his orations and letters. Moreoever, the greatest convergence between Gregory's talk about himself and his talk about God, for which he is far better known, comes in Christological form. In Christ, Gregory knows God most intimately from his own human life. When Gregory speaks of Christ, he also talks about himself, and when he speaks of himself, he also talks about Christ.

In this monograph, I will argue that this phenomenon of Gregory's rhetorical blend of Christ and himself is so comprehensive and penetrating that Gregory's teachings on Christ could be called an "autobiographical Christology." By using the term "autobiographical," I am not suggesting a naïve acceptance of Gregory's writing about himself as some objective record of facts that would fit modern, historical criteria. Yet, I am also suspicious of a postmodern attempt that reacts against a modern notion of an autonomous self and thereby rejects "a single unified 'personality'" of Gregory.[19] Rather, I think Gregory's writings do tell us something about their single author. In fact, precisely in the variety of elusive ways that he speaks, a consistency and vibrancy can be detected.[20] As I will show, Gregory pervasively displays a remarkable sensitivity of expressing the mystery of Christ in terms of his own life. For instance, Gregory aligns his birthplace of Nazianzus with "Bethlehem" in five different texts.[21] This sort of reference to Bethlehem may strike the

[19] Suzanne Abrams Rebillard says, "New critical approaches are unmasking Gregory . . . though what many of the old and new approaches hold in common is an understanding of poetry written in the first person as revelatory of a self-consciously self-contained and autonomous 'I'—rhetorically and philosophically fashioned according to intellectual and aesthetic norms, but still a single unified 'personality.'" She goes on, against even these more recent approaches, to conclude: "An 'I' in the modern subjective sense cannot be found because the poet did not conceive of himself as an autonomous self. This is not to say Gregory did not exist or that true suffering was not part of his inspiration to write, but these cannot be found in these poems." See Suzanne Abrams Rebillard, "The Autobiographical *Prosopopoeia* of Gregory of Nazianzus," *Studia Patristica* 47 (2010): 123–28.

[20] Brian E. Daley, S.J., rightly cautions: "Living in an age in which personal self-disclosure was becoming a new literary form, he has a great deal to tell us about his own life, his feelings, and his judgments; yet he remains always something of an enigma, hiding as much as he reveals about himself through the literary conventions and allusions in which he recounts his experiences." See Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, The Early Church Fathers (London: Routledge, 2006), 2. Daley concludes his paragraph with a statement of great significance for the present Christological project: "Gregory of Nazianzus embodies for us both the challenge and the allure of coming to recognize faith, culture, and distinctive human traits embodied in the literary production of a single person: a giant in the developing tradition of Christian reflection on the 'mixing' of the human and the divine; a man full of human learning, frailty, and passion and enlivened by an unshakeable faith in the nearness of God" (pp. 2–3).

[21] Bethlehem refers once to Gregory's Anastasia church in Constantinople (*Carm*. 2.1.16.62) and five times to Nazianzus (*Carm*. 2.2.1.366; *Epitaph* 63, *Or*. 3.6, *Or*. 18.17, *Or*. 33.10). See Kristoffel Demoen, "Some Remarks on the Life and Poems of Gregory Nazianzen," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 63 (1997): 171–79, at pp. 173–74. To take one of these examples, we see that in defending his rustic background to those in Constantinople, Gregory says in *Or*. 33.10, "I will be ranked with Bethlehem, and I will be dishonored with the manger. Since you dishonor God, what wonder is it if for the same reason you scorn also his herald?"

reader as odd, but it is, in fact, characteristic of Gregory's style. A selective reading of Gregory's texts has missed distinctive contours of his rhetoric such as this intermingling between his own birthplace and Christ's. None of the places where he refers to his hometown as Bethlehem is counted among the *Theological Orations* or the *Theological Epistles* where scholars frequently go to formulate Gregory's Christology.[22] By repeatedly attending to Gregory's rhetoric in the breadth of his work, we will find that his better-known doctrinal formulations about Christ, too, are imprinted with an appropriation of Christ's life for his own life.

While ambiguous phrases will be found in Gregory's exuberance, this self-identification with Christ does not mean that Gregory confuses himself with Christ. Instead, Gregory understands life insofar as he knows himself wholly belonging to the God who mixed with mortals. Without Christ, life is absurd for Gregory. As he twice says in the tragic verse of iambic trimeter, "Without you, my Christ, this life would be a crime!"[23] Through this artful way of evoking Christ by references to his life, Gregory's constant turn to himself reveals God at work in the depths of his being. At times, scholars read Gregory's introspective turn as his weakness. Some think of his introspection as a reflex of the Church's "most irreducibly individualistic" person with an almost pathological sensitivity.[24] But his very turn inward is expressed to an audience so that they, too, can find Christ in their lives. With his considerable rhetorical skills, he is making himself a model for those he serves in priestly ministry.[25] For example, in preaching the need of a pure attachment to Christ, Gregory intimates the heart of his own faith:

> For why is the Christian held in honor? Is it not that Christ is God? Even though I love him as human, I am mingled together with him by friendship (*φιλίᾳ πρὸς αὐτὸν συγκεκραμένος*). And yet I honor Peter, but I am not called a Petrine; and I honor Paul, but have never been called a Pauline. I do not accept being named from human beings, because I have been born from God. So then, if it is because you have received God that you are called a Christian, may you ever be so called, and may you remain in the name and in the reality.[26]

[22] For the emphasis on certain privileged texts to understand Gregory's Christology, see Kenneth P. Wesche, "'Mind' and 'Self' in the Christology of Saint Gregory the Theologian: Saint Gregory's Contribution to Christology and Christian Anthropology," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 39 (1994): 33–61. Wesche says that the "complete expression of Saint Gregory's Christological doctrine" is found in *Or.* 29 and 30 and in *Ep.* 101 and 102 (p. 50).

[23] *Εἰ μὴ σὸς εἴην, ἠδίκημαι, Χριστέ μου.* (*Carm.* 2.1.74.4 and 12 [PG 37.1421–22]; trans. Daley, 170). Daley's translation keeps the iambic trimeter in English.

[24] Louis Bouyer, *History of Christian Spirituality*, vol. 1: *The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers*, trans. Mary P. Ryan (London: Burns & Oates, 1963), 341–51, at pp. 341–42.

[25] Gregory of Nazianzus "almost always combines in his rhetoric a protreptic orientation towards his audience with a strong emotive element, as a direct expression of his own attitude towards what he is speaking about." See Jostein Børtnes, "Rhetoric and Mental Images in Gregory," in *Gregory of Nazianzus: Images and Reflections*, eds. Jostein Børtnes and Tomas Hägg (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2006), 37–57, at p. 47.

[26] *Or.* 37.17 (SC 318.306); trans. Browne and Swallow, 343 (alt.).

Gregory sees that the dignity of the Christian is in Christ as God. Insofar as Gregory is mingled with Christ and named for him, he knows that his life has a much higher significance than anything this world can give. He wants his audience to know that they can have the same relationship with God.

Therefore, as one born from God and bearing Christ's name, Gregory continually gives his voice to his baptismal union with Christ so that others may be inspired to follow suit. Holding this firmly in his mind, the locus of salvation where the Word elevates his life, Gregory employs his rhetorical skill to expounding the mystery of Christ in his life and the lives of those who listen to his explication of what baptism effects. This effort was not lost on contemporaries who found him to be a voice of Christian faith, one that seemed to blend his identity with Christ. For example, in a striking tribute from a younger friend, Evagrius Ponticus calls Gregory "the mouth of Christ."[27]

This approach to appreciate Christ on Gregory's personal terms comes after the domination of *Dogmengeschichte*, a method for tracing the history of ideas. Since the nineteenth century, it has been used to assess the conformity, or nonconformity, of a particular theologian's writings to subsequently defined dogmas. For example, the modern discipline of Christology has been concerned with determining whether or not ideas about Jesus Christ fit into a trajectory that culminates in the Council of Chalcedon (451). While this approach has advantages, it often fails to capture the spirit that animates individual Christologies. A method that judges Gregory's doctrine on the Savior primarily by reference to later Christological controversies cannot fully appreciate the spirit of Gregory's thought.[28] To be sure, Gregory has a significant role in the development of Christological doctrine, especially for the role his *Ep.* 101, 102, and 202 played not only in the controversies of his time, but as touchstones of orthodoxy for subsequent doctrinal disputes. To appreciate the significance of his theology for later Christological doctrine, we need only to recall the enormous influence of Gregory's pithy statement from *Ep.* 101, "For what is not assumed is not healed."[29]

But Gregory has much more to teach than an occasional turn of phrase. He offers a wide-ranging appreciation of the mystery of the Word made human that exceeds the confines of standard textbook accounts. Gregory's is a

[27] Evagrius Ponticus, the author of the text traditionally cited as Basil, *Ep.* 8.1.

[28] I have been inspired by the overview of Robert Louis Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003). Wilken writes, "I am convinced that the study of early Christian thought has been too preoccupied with ideas. The intellectual effort of the early church was at the service of a much loftier goal than giving conceptual form to Christian belief. Its mission was to win the hearts and minds of men and women and to change their lives" (xiv). For a comparable use of Wilken's insight, see Bryan M. Litfin, *Getting to Know the Church Fathers: An Evangelical Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2007), 15.

[29] *Ep.* 101.5(32) (SC 208.50).

Christology that appears richly rhetorical and deeply scriptural. Combative against opponents, it is pastoral for the needs of salvation and steeped in the mysteries of baptismal union with Christ. Influential for the developments of competing Christologies, it is frustratingly ambiguous for those who seek answers for questions posed in a later era. What will become clear through this book is that Gregory makes an achievement of personal insight, arguably unprecedented for its theological scope in the history of Christian reflection, into the divinizing mystery of Christ for one's own life.[30]

Given the importance of Gregory of Nazianzus for the history of Christological doctrine, it might come as a surprise that the present monograph constitutes the first published book dedicated to giving an overview of Christ in Gregory.[31] As we will see, it is structured quite differently from other available considerations of Gregory's Christology. Frederick Norris's groundbreaking 1970 dissertation examines Gregory's doctrine of Christ within a framework of historical development amid studies on the Trinity and salvation. It is, of course, impossible to write well about Gregory's Christology

[30] Gregory's contribution to the history of reflection on deification—such as in coining the term *theōsis*—merits repeated study. This book uses a variety of means to render Gregory's expansive language of divinization. Gregory's poetic exuberance should be seen in tandem with his ultimate distinction between the Trinity and creation, so necessary for affirming the equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For example, Gregory says: "Let us speak of a creature as being 'of God' [*Θεοῦ*]—for that is a great thing when said of us, after all!—but never as being God [*Θεὸς δὲ, μηδαμῶς*]. Only then will I accept that a creature is God, when I too may literally become God [*ὅταν κἀγὼ γένωμαι κυρίως Θεός*]! This is the point: if something is God, it is not a creature, for the creature is classed with us, who are not gods. But if it is a creature, it is not God, for it began in time. And of what had a beginning: there was, when it was not!" (*Or*. 42.17 [SC 384.86]; trans. Daley, 148). Cf. Vladimir Kharlamov, "Rhetorical Application of *Theosis* in Greek Patristic Theology," in *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions*, eds. Michael J. Christensen and Jeffery A. Wittung (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), 115–31, at p. 126, and Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 213–25, esp. p. 222.

[31] An unpublished dissertation covering the dogmatic significance of Gregory's Christology is the rewarding study of Frederick W. Norris, "Gregory Nazianzen's Doctrine of Jesus Christ," Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1970. A thesis on the presence of Christ in Gregory's poetry (in Latin translation) is Franco Rudasso, O.C.D, *La figura di Cristo in S. Gregorio Nazianzeno*, Bibliotheca Carmelitica, series II: studia, vol. 8 (Rome: Edizioni del Teresianum, 1968). Other books on related topics offer approaches to Gregory's Christology. These include the pioneering work of Gregory's theology in Jean Plagnieux, *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze Théologien*. Bouteneff notes that Plagnieux "is not particularly attentive to Christological questions." Peter Bouteneff, "St. Gregory Nazianzen and Two-Nature Christology," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 38 (1994): 255–70, at p. 255 n. 3. Bouteneff shows the need for more study: "[O]ne can scarcely say that Gregory's Christology has been studied in depth. Yet such a study yields rich rewards" (p. 255). Also, see the soteriological studies of Heinz Althaus, *Die Heilslehre des heiligen Gregor von Nazianz* (Münster: Verlag Aschendorff, 1972) and Donald F. Winslow, *The Dynamics of Salvation: A Study in Gregory of Nazianzus*, Patristic Monograph Series 7 (Cambridge, MA: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1979). Beeley's brilliant overview of Gregory's Trinitarian theology has an important chapter on Christ. See Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 115–51.

without constant reference to the mysteries of the Trinity and salvation. Yet, the themes made explicit below do not fit as easily into systematic categories as do Trinitarian theology and soteriology. Moreover, while the present study alerts the reader to significant dates and particular controversies in Gregory's life, it advances the argument under a methodology other than one governed by a timeline. Given that Gregory probably composed various texts as rhetorical exercises and edited even more of his work in the last years of his life, exact dates for the completion of his works cannot always be ascertained.[32] Rather, we look for the spirit of Gregory's Christology in another manner: one which unfolds over the following six chapters before reaching the Epilogue. From these six chapters and the Epilogue, Gregory's Christology will appear through these pages differently from the ways it has customarily been presented in scholarship.

Chapter 1 discusses Gregory's theology of the Word in our approach toward his distinctive way of speaking about the mystery of Christ. Gregory's love for the *logos* in its multivalence covers all his thought. This chapter gives a tour through Gregory's rhetorical theology by adducing abundant evidence for us to hear Gregory speak of the *logos*. For Gregory, Christ is the Word of God who comes to guide him and his audience to the light of the Trinity. This foundation of Gregory's theology of the Word prepares us to focus more intensely on the intermingling of Christ and himself in Gregory's Christomorphic autobiography and autobiographical Christology.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of Gregory's autobiography and his identification with Christ in those writings. It begins by considering the autobiographical character of Gregory's works in general, and it then focuses on the special place of Christ in Gregory's self-referential poetry. A detailed study of the poem *De rebus suis* considers Gregory's prayers to Christ as *exempla* for his readers. This chapter argues that his construction of his inner life for a public view can be understood, in part, through his conviction that Christ heals his life as he narrates it. Moreover, his deeply Christomorphic autobiography heals others' lives in their reading and imitating the prayerful life described in the text.

Following this review of autobiography, the study turns to texts more commonly associated with Gregory's Christology. Chapter 3 probes the mixtures of Gregory and Christ, i.e., how Gregory uses the language of mingling to speak of his own human mystery and the Incarnation. To do so, the chapter examines the variety of philosophical language on mixtures, and argues for a revision of the frequently cited view that identifies Gregory's mixture language as Stoic. Instead, we will see that Gregory frequently uses mixture terms to indicate the general principle that the stronger transforms the weaker. In order

[32] Cf. Čelica Milovanović, "Sailing to Sophistopolis: Gregory of Nazianzus and Greek Declamation," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13 (2005): 187–232.

for the spiritual to transform the physical for Gregory's salvation, a new or second mixture is needed: Christ. What we will find is that Gregory's rhetoric of *krasis*, or blending, rejected by Chalcedon in Christological doctrine, is a key that opens up the Theologian's thinking to us. For Gregory, the blend of divinity and humanity in Christ blends him and others into unity.

After our study of Gregory's mixture language, Chapter 4 offers a new consideration of *Ep*. 101. It takes seriously the vast complexity of Christologies operating in the fourth century, and it focuses on Gregory's response to the crisis occasioned by the Apollinarians threatening to take over the church of Nazianzus. Prefaced by a consideration of Gregory's rhetoric in controversial writing, the chapter's focus is a detailed consideration of *Ep*. 101's ten anathemas, followed by Gregory's concern for his salvation expressed in the remaining portion of that letter.

Chapter 5 considers Gregory's approach to the mysteries of Christ. The dynamism of Gregory's autobiographical Christology comes into its most vivid expression when he treats the mysteries of Christ's life: mysteries which he blends with events of his own life. After its review of what it means to celebrate the mysteries of Christ, Chapter 5 studies the Epiphany mysteries in *Or*. 38–40. It also considers the other mysteries of Christ's life, focusing on his suffering, death, and resurrection, especially as presented in the two orations on Pascha, *Or*. 1 and 45. Between these two sets of mysteries, the chapter explores how one detail of Christ's mysteries, the stoning (cf. John 8: 59 and 10: 31), is viewed by Gregory as something lived in his own life, most vividly in the 380 Easter Vigil in Constantinople when he was stoned by angry monks. The chapter concludes with a recognition of Christology's limits through Gregory's Pneumatology in *Or*. 41, *On Pentecost*.

Chapter 6 demonstrates the intrinsic significance of ministry to Gregory's autobiographical Christology. As such, it focuses on Gregory's understanding of the priesthood in *Or*. 2, and then considers both models and anti-models of Christomorphic ministry constructed in Gregory's writings. It proceeds to study two areas in Gregory's ministry where his Christ features prominently: marriage/virginity and wealth/poverty. Ministry is thus not simply an application of Gregory's teaching on Christ, but a living out of how Christ radically changes human lives and the way we relate to one another.

In short, this book's goal of expounding Gregory's Christology takes seriously the distinctive notes found in his laments, praises, instructions, and exhortations that blend Christ and himself. Again and again we will see through the full range of Gregory's writings that his teaching on Christ involves reflection on his own life, and Gregory's account of his life bears the marks of his Savior. By studying his Christology with his autobiography, we hear how Gregory's rhetoric portrays the mystery of Christ as salvific for his own life—and for those who listen to him.

1

Gregory's Theology of the Word

In his characteristic style of combining elements of autobiography with Christology, Gregory says in a Christologically dense discourse: "Again I set the tongues in motion; again some rage against Christ, or rather against me, as I have been deemed worthy to be a herald of the Word."[1] Before we pursue studies on his Christomorphic autobiography and autobiographical Christology, it would be good to concentrate, first, on the meanings that Gregory finds in the *logos*. Gregory clearly considers himself as the "herald of the Word," here in this oration, in reference to Christ himself. But as minuscules were not yet invented in the fourth century, it is anachronistic to presume simply by capitalization, or a lack of capitalization, in texts and translations, what Gregory has in mind when speaking of the *logos*. He repeatedly rejoices in the connections between the Word and words. *Logos*, in its rich ambiguity, can serve as the key for us to unlock some difficulties in understanding not only Gregory's teaching on Christ, but also his life in Christ.

In an epitaph for himself, Gregory enumerates ten significant aspects of his life. The fourth is: "The Word granted me double-edged speech."[2] Gregory feels that his gift of speech came from the Word, and he crafts his words to imitate the Word. Moreover, Gregory's love for the Word shapes not only his use of words, but also his entire life. In *Or.* 6.4–5, Gregory says that he offers his words, his sole wealth, in the oration as a sacrifice to God, and finds the pearl of great price in exchange for what little he has. He then professes:

[1] *Or.* 37.4 (SC 318.28).

[2] *Carm.* 2.1.93 (PG 37.1448); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 469; cf. Čelica Milovanović-Barham, "Gregory of Nazianzus: Ars Poetica (*In suos versus: Carmen* 2.1.39)," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 5 (1997): 497–510. On p. 497, Milovanović translates this phrase "blessed with a two-edged speech" and writes that Gregory "was so proud of his literary versatility" of being both a supreme orator and prolific poet. But that overlooks the third genre of Gregory's numerous epistles. W. R. Paton takes "two-edged speech" to mean sacred and profane. See *The Greek Anthology*, vol. 2, trans. W. R. Paton, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 435 n. 1. Could the phrase allude to Heb 4: 12 to suggest that Gregory's speech has the sharpness of the Word?

> I cling to the Word alone, as servant of the Word, and would never willingly neglect this possession, but on the contrary honor him and embrace him and take more pleasure in him than in all other things combined that delight the multitude, and I make him the partner of my whole life.[3]

In showing the overlapping meanings of *logos* for Gregory, this chapter tries to unify two very different approaches to Gregory's writing: the doctrinal and the rhetorical. If scholars take Gregory's doctrine without his rhetoric, they are prone to read theological statements without understanding what Gregory himself means by them. Even in doing work on Gregory's understanding of logos, they may focus completely on a doctrinal perspective that ignores his literary prowess.[4] Yet, if scholars take Gregory's rhetoric without his doctrine, they miss the very heart of what drove Gregory.[5] This chapter is offered as a bridge to that gap between doctrinal and rhetorical studies. It takes a cue from the Dominican Pierre-Thomas Camelot's brief essay, whose title was, itself, inspired by Dom Jean Leclercq.[6] By elucidating how Gregory blends the meanings of *logos*, we will enter Gregory's Christology from the perpective of what Gregory holds most dear: the *logos* in his life.

We begin by considering the word itself. *Logos*, the verbal noun of *legō*, has different definitions, depending upon the philosophical system, rhetorical context, and authorial use in ancient writings. Its philosophical origins lie in Heraclitus, and its meanings became more developed and varied in such

[3] *Or.* 6.5 (SC 405.132–34); trans. Vinson, 7 (alt.). Vinson's translation reverses the capitalization in the SC text so that Gregory clings to the Word alone as a servant of the word. For an interpretation similar to Vinson's, which contrasts *Or.* 6.5 with the *logoi* of *Or.* 4.100, see Neil McLynn, "Among the Hellenists: Gregory and the Sophists," in *Gregory of Nazianzus: Images and Reflections*, eds. Jostein Børtnes and Tomas Hägg, 213–38, at p. 226. Elm gives this translation of the phrase in question: "I have clung to the word alone as servant to the Word." See Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 426.

[4] John Egan, "Gregory of Nazianzus and the Logos Doctrine," in *Word and Spirit: Essays in Honor of David Michael Stanley, S.J. on his 60th Birthday*, ed. Joseph Plevnik, S.J. (Willowdale, ON: Regis College Press, 1975), 281–319. John Egan considers the influence (or rather lack thereof) of Stoicism's doctrine of a two-staged "immanent word" and "uttered word" in Gregory's thinking on the Father's Word, especially by drawing comparisons to Origen, Athanasius, and Augustine. Although significant for understanding Gregory's theology and anthropology in a few passages such as *Or.* 28.13, Egan's approach does not consider how multifaceted Gregory's teaching is on the *logos*.

[5] McGuckin's bibliography cites 71 works under the two categories of Gregory's poetic work/its allusions and classical rhetoric/Hellenism, but only 37 works for the four topics of Gregory's Trinitarian theology, Christology, soteriology, and spirituality. See *St. Gregory of Nazianzus*, 427 and McGuckin's own complaint to this effect on p. xxiii.

[6] Pierre-Thomas Camelot, O.P., "Amour des lettres et désir de Dieu chez Saint Grégoire de Nazianze: Les Logoi au service du Logos," in *Littérature et Religion*, Mélanges offerts à Monsieur le Chanoine Joseph Coppin, *Mélanges de science religieuse* tome supplémentaire (Lille: Facultés Catholiques, 1966), 23–30. Cf. Jan-Maria Szymusiak, "Note sur l'amour des lettres au service de la foi chrétienne chez Grégoire de Nazianze," in *Oikoumene: Studi paleocristiani in onore del Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II* (Catania: Centro di Studi sull'Antico Cristianesimo, 1964), 507–13.

schools of philosophy and rhetoric as Plato, Isocrates, Aristotle, and the Stoics. But most influential for Christianity, was the prologue of the Gospel according to John: "In the beginning was the *logos*, the *logos* was with God and the *logos* was God . . . . And the *logos* was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1: 1, 14).[7] With this precedent, Gregory's love for the *logos* springs not merely from Greek rhetorical and philosophical founts, but most importantly, from the revelation of God's identity and dwelling with the human race. From that distinctively evangelical basis, Gregory extols the meanings of *logos* as the Word of the Father, any word or speech, reason or rationality, logic, oration, study, Scripture, and definition.[8] Gregory frequently mixes the senses of *logos* for a persuasive effect in the 1590 times the term appears in prose and in the 858 times in poetry.[9]

Furthermore, for Gregory, it should be emphasized that true discourse is not a matter of mere words, but of the realities from the Word that they represent.[10] This has tremendous significance for the present inquiry. Gregory uses a multiplicity of synonyms, coins new words, and writes of the same mystery in a great variety of prose and poetic techniques.[11] Gregory knows

[7] After translating verses from the Johannine prologue, Pierre Hadot goes so far as to say, "Christian philosophy was made possible by the ambiguity of the Greek word *Logos*." See his *What is Ancient Philosophy?* trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 238. For an insightful study of *logos* in John's Prologue against the Hellenistic-Jewish background, see Austin G. Murphy, O.S.B., "Re-reading the Johannine Prologue," *Pro Ecclesia* 14 (2005): 306–23.

[8] Cf. G. J. M. Bartelink, "Jeux de mots autour de *λόγος*, de ses composés et dérivés chez les auteurs chrétiens," in *Mélanges offerts à Mlle Christine Mohrmann* (Utrecht-Anvers: Spectrum, 1963), 23–27. Bartelink catalogues various senses of *logos*, but when he comes to Gregory's *Or*. 19 he confuses Julian the tax adjuster with Emperor Julian.

[9] See the *Thesaurus Sancti Gregorii Nazianzeni*. Cf. Anne Richard, *Cosmologie et théologie chez Grégoire de Nazianze*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2003), 462.

[10] Frederick Norris says,"[N]o connection is to be made between the names of things and God's revelation because language is not a revelational gift of God, even though Clement of Alexandria and Origen so described it." See Norris, "Theology as Grammar: Nazianzen and Wittgenstein," in *Arianism after Arius: Essays on the Development of the Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflicts*, eds. Michel R. Barnes and Daniel H. Williams (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 237–49, at p. 239. But for Gregory, there seems to be something fitting within the structure of things, the *pragmata*, reflected in the analogous senses of *logos*. Susanna Elm gives her assessment: "For Gregory, God's essence is in the end a *mysterion*. Yet, for him, too, language was a gift of God." See Elm, "Orthodoxy and the True Philosophical Life: Julian and Gregory of Nazianzus," *Studia Patristica* 37 (2001): 69–85, at p. 84. Both Norris and Elm cite Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.24 as a key text to consider. In later reflecting on *Or*. 4, Elm writes, "For him, all words, *phônai*, and all arts, *technai*, had been created either directly by the artful and creative *Logos* or by divinely created inventors. In my view, this implies that Gregory thought language originated with God—that is, was of divine origin—but had been given to humans by means of *technē*, art, invented by (human) inventors." See Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 396.

[11] Frederick W. Norris notes that Gregory coined some 500 words, which suggests something of Gregory's creativity and is neglected by those who think of him merely as a popularizer. See Norris, "Gregory Contemplating the Beautiful: Knowing Human Misery and Divine Mystery

that his considerable battery of words is at the service of the inexhaustible Word, whose mystery is to be experienced in life. In various ways, as we will see, he shows remarkable attention to the blend of *logos* with *bios*.[12] Most importantly, the Word comes to expression in the frailty of earthly human life, and this lowly life is raised up in the Word.

In this chapter, we explore Gregory's teaching on the *logos* through four brief studies that become, by modern standards, more and more overtly Christological. The first attends to Gregory's appreciation for *logos* as expressed in the three genres in which he chose to write: orations, letters, and poems. The chapter then considers the purification by the *logos* in philosophy and rhetoric, in order for one created by the *logos* to know and persuade others about the things of God. After this, it considers Gregory's understanding of the *logos* as revealed through the Sacred Scriptures for Christian living. Finally, it applies Gregory's hermeneutics to reading Scriptures for the difference between the properly theological and economic treatments of the *logos*, or Son, of God the Father. These brief studies speak of *logos* in its significance for human life, especially in the lives of Gregory and his audience. A brief conclusion will synthesize these findings, and all subsequent chapters will show their relevance by focusing on Gregory's blend of the incarnate Word and himself. With this method, we hope to understand better what Gregory means by taking the Word as his "partner for the whole of life."[13]

GREGORY'S GENRES—THE WORD IN CLASSICAL STYLES

The reader today has access to many of Gregory's words in three genres. As was mentioned in the Introduction, Gregory has bequeathed to us 44 orations for different occasions and purposes; 246 letters to friends, family, and officials; and some 17,000 lines of poetry in various classical meters.[14] The

through and Being Persuaded by Images," in *Gregory of Nazianzus: Images and Reflections*, eds. Jostein Børtnes and Tomas Hägg , 19–35, at p. 33 n. 40.

[12] For Gregory's distinction between *zôē* (heavenly life) and *bios* (earthly life), see Suzanne Abrams Rebillard, "Speaking for Salvation: Gregory of Nazianzus as Poet and Priest in His Autobiographical Poems," Ph.D. diss. Brown University, 2003, 35.

[13] *Or.* 6.5, given in this chapter's introduction above.

[14] Gregory's orations are numbered from 1 to 45, but *Or.* 35 is generally held to be spurious. Occasionally one still finds mention of 45 extant orations, as in John Behr, *Formation of Christian Theology*, vol. 2: *The Nicene Faith*, parts 1–2 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 331. McGuckin explains that since *Or.* 11 is two orations combined editorially, one can still say 45 orations. See his *St. Gregory of Nazianzus*, 239 n. 43. For the latest research on the letters, see Bradley K. Storin, "The Letters of Gregory of Nazianzus: Discourse and Community in Late Antique Epistolary Culture," Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 2012. Departing from

significance of the genres should not go unnoticed. Gregory does not choose to write exegetically detailed homilies, biblical commentaries, or doctrinal treatises as can be found in the writings of Origen and the Fathers contemporary to Gregory.[15] Rather, he models an authentically Christian expression of the Greek heritage of letters, and he does so, at times, in strikingly original ways.[16] Moreover, his achievement of evangelizing classical culture by incorporating the best of (pagan) literature differs markedly from Origen, who never quotes a single Greek poet in all of his sermons and commentaries extant.[17] By attending to each of the three genres in Gregory's oeuvre we can have a better appreciation for Gregory's theological mind.

Gallay and siding with McGuckin, Storin thinks that *Ep*. 88, to Nectarius, is misascribed. *Ep*. 241 was written by Basil, and is properly identified as Basil's *Ep*. 196. The subject of much modern debate, our Gregory's *Ep*. 249 seems to be more properly known as Gregory of Nyssa's *Ep*. 1. As for the poetry, estimates vary on how much of what is attributed to Gregory is genuine. Most significantly for the present study, Gregory probably did not author the poem *Christus Patiens* of 2,602 lines, sometimes attributed to him. Cf. McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 403. See the arguments in favor of Gregory's authorship in *La Passion du Christ: Tragédie*, introduction, critical text, French translation, notes and index by André Tuilier, SC 149 (Paris: Cerf, 1969). Norris says that the text may very well be genuine, but he does not profess competence to judge. In any case, Norris says that he found "nothing of pressing significance" in the work for his study. See Norris, "Gregory Nazianzen's Doctrine of Jesus Christ," 215–17. The text differs from Gregory's works known to be genuine in its lack of an expressed Trinitarian theology and its heightened Mariology. For example, would Gregory close a poem by singing a hymn to Mary for her to accept his prayers without any reference to the Trinity? Cf. H. M. Werhahn, "Dubia und Spuria bei Gregor von Nazianz," *Studia Patristica* 7 (1966): 337–47. Even leaving aside the *Christus Patiens*, Gregory's poetry is only second in volume to Nonnus of extant poetry from the early Christian centuries. See Mary Whitby, "Gregory of Nazianzus and the Traditions of Secular Greek Hexameter Poetry," forthcoming. I am grateful for her sharing this work with me.

[15] Brian Daley explains, "Perhaps it was simply that while his scholarly model, Origen, and his own contemporaries, Didymus and Jerome, always remained grammarians at heart—philologists, workers with texts—Gregory was, by preference, more of a rhetor; his interest in the art of words lay more in persuasion than in analysis and quiet discovery." See Brian E. Daley, S. J. "Walking through the Word of God: Gregory of Nazianzus as a Biblical Interpreter," in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays*, eds. J. Ross Wagner, C. Kavin Rowe, and A. Katherine Grieb (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 514–31, at p. 530.

[16] Peter Brown speaks of the ubiquitous tensions in late antiquity: "Late antique persons, of every class and level of culture, lived in many conflicting 'thought-worlds'. Potentially exclusive explanatory systems coexisted in their minds." See Peter Brown, *Authority and the Sacred: Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 69. Gregory attempts a harmonious blend of "thought-worlds." Yet, for one to say that Gregory wrested classical literature from pagans is not to do his rhetoric justice. Elm explains, "Greek Christians thus did not conquer, adopt, or appropriate *logoi* and *paideia* (that is, Hellenism or pagan culture), because one does not adopt, conquer, or appropriate what one possesses by birth, education, and divine design." See Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 11 n. 33.

[17] See Ihor Ševčenko, "A Shadow Outline of Virtue: The Classical Heritage of Greek Christian Literature (Second to Seventh Century)," in *Age of Spirituality: A Symposium*, ed. Kurt Weitzmann (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980), 53–73, at p. 56.

The Word in Gregory's orations

Gregory's most renowned genre is known in English as the oration or discourse: terms that simply translate the word *logos*. Gregory considers the oration itself to have great significance and waxes eloquent about its power, such as when he preaches after the death of his brother. He says that the funeral oration will make Caesarius be remembered forever.[18] Similarly, he says that his invective against Julian is loftier than the Pillars of Hercules, because through Gregory's pillar people of all places and times will know what will become of those who rebel against God.[19] Gregory's effusive description for his own words may make one pause today, but an orator's praise for his own discourse was expected at that time. For example, Gregory's contemporary, Libanius, famed orator of Antioch, similarly speaks of his funeral oration causing the deceased to be remembered, and his words being the best rhetoric in the world.[20] Yet, unlike Libanius and other pagans, Gregory offers a distinctively Christian understanding of the Word through the very genre of the oration. The following considers three examples from Gregory's orations, which, although they may have been later edited and expanded or, in fact, were more rhetorical stage pieces rather than preaching at a particular time and place, give the impression of a lively oral delivery.[21] As testified by Jerome,

[18] Cf. *Or*. 7.16. Martin McGuire calls Gregory "the pioneer in adapting the pagan funeral oration to Christian use." See *Funeral Orations by Saint Gregory Nazianzen and Saint Ambrose*, trans. Leo P. McCauley, S.J., et al., with an introd. by Martin R. P. McGuire, Fathers of the Church, vol. 22 (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1953), xvi.

[19] *Or*. 5.42 (SC 309.380). Cf. C. W. King's remark about the analogy of the English word "pillory" in Charles William King, *Julian the Emperor: Containing Gregory Nazianzen's Two Invectives and Libanius' Monody with Julian's Extant Theosophical Works* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1888), 120 n. 2. Elm begins her chap. 10 with a quotation from *Or*. 5.42. See Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 433. For her analysis of Gregory's neologism of *stēlographia* (writing on a pillar) in *Or*. 4.20, see pp. 344–48.

[20] For an account of a funeral oration, see Libanius, *Autobiography* 189 (R 121; F 169). Libanius's self-appraisal in rhetorical skills is found in many places. For example, when recounting that other rhetors' students were coming to him, Libanius explains: "You would not prosecute men of good looks for rape if many people transferred their affections to them: in the same way the attraction of perfect oratory would not prove the author of that perfection be a rogue." See his *Autobiography* 38 (R 30; F 103); *Autobiography and Selected Letters*, vol. 1, trans. A. F. Norman, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 99.

[21] As for the possibility of no original or staged oral deliverance, various scholars have pondered how some of Gregory's orations seem too long to be delivered comfortably or lack the particularities expected in a speech. For example, Jean Bernardi thinks that *Or*. 4 and 5 are fictive in delivery. Bernardi, *La Prédication des Pères Cappadociens: Le Prédicateur et son auditoire* (Marseilles: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), 254. One of the three examples below is *Or*. 14, which Čelica Milovanović considers as a deliberative speech that Gregory gives in the plain style, a model in this genre for other bishops to use. See Milovanović, "Sailing to Sophistopolis: Gregory of Nazianzus and Greek Declamation," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13 (2005): 187–232, esp. pp. 221–26.

Gregory's persuasive preaching roused waves of applause—even in interpreting an abstruse biblical matter that left Jerome scratching his head.[22]

When beginning *Or.* 14, *On Love of the Poor*, Gregory appeals to his audience as being poor with him before God so that they may be generous, first, in listening to his oration, and then generous in giving to those in need. In some of the most stirring words on behalf of the poor in the early Church, he begins:

> Brothers and sisters, poor with me—all of us are beggars and needy of divine grace, even if one of us may seem to have more than others when measured on a small scale—accept my words on love of the poor (*τὸν περὶ φιλοπτωχίας λόγον*), not in a mean spirit but generously, that you may be rich in God's Kingdom; and pray that we may bestow this on you richly; and nourish your souls with our discourse (*θρέψαι τῷ λόγῳ τὰς ὑμετέρας ψυχὰς*), breaking spiritual bread for the poor. Perhaps we may make nourishment rain from heaven, as Moses did in ancient times, lavishing on you the bread of angels; or perhaps we may feed many thousands in the desert with a few loaves, and leave them satisfied, as Jesus later did, who is the true bread and the source of true life.[23]

Gregory thus understands his oration to be nourishment, spiritual bread, which will strengthen his listeners in an act reminiscent of Christ's feeding of the multitudes.

Gregory gives repeated attention to this metaphor of his preaching as feeding people in Christological fashion.[24] In one of the most influential homilies in history to celebrate the birth of Christ, *Or.* 38, *On the Theophany*, Gregory sees himself as a host at a great feast of the Word. He says: "As for us, who worship the Word (*Λόγος*), if we must live luxuriously, let us luxuriate in the word (*ἐν λόγῳ τρυφήσωμεν*), and in the law and the narratives of God—all

[22] Jerome writes in his *Ep.* 52.8, to Nepotian, about his earlier request for Gregory's interpretation of the "Second-First Sabbath" in Luke 6: 1 and the reception of Gregory's preaching on the matter that he witnessed in Constantinople. Cf. Gallay, *La Vie de saint Grégoire de Nazianze*, 179–81; McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 348–49. Jerome's witness to this homily makes me think that Gregory selected which homilies would be preserved. John McGuckin, on the other hand, writes, "We have extant almost every homily that Gregory ever delivered." See McGuckin, "Patterns of Biblical Exegesis in the Cappadocian Fathers: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and Gregory of Nyssa," in *Orthodox and Wesleyan Scriptural Understanding and Practice*, eds. S. T. Kimbrough and S. T. Kimbrough, Jr. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Press, 2005), 37–54, at p. 40.

[23] *Or.* 14.1 (PG 35.857D–860A); trans. Daley, 76. Considering the first five or so chapters of this oration, Meredith writes, "With the exception of the reference to poverty in grace, we are very much in a Hellenistic atmosphere." See Anthony Meredith, S.J., "The Three Cappadocians on Beneficence: A Key to Their Audience," in *Preacher and Audience: Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homilies*, ed. Mary B. Cunningham and Pauline Allen (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 89–104, at p. 100. I accept Meredith's identification of Hellenistic ideas present, but Gregory's particular way of blending elements is more evangelical than what Meredith suggests.

[24] For another example, see *Or.* 34.1–2 and esp. *Or.* 34.7 (SC 318.210), where Gregory quotes Prov 9: 5 of Wisdom's call to eat bread and wine "which I have mixed for you" (*ὃν κεκέρακα ὑμῖν*).

of them, but especially the story behind this present feast—that our luxury may be appropriate, and not alien to the one who has called us together." Gregory then asks, "Would you like me, as your host today, to set words (*λόγον*) about these things before you, my honored guests, as abundantly and ambitiously as I can?" Gregory goes on to explain, "For our discourse (*ὁ λόγος*) is about God, and therefore divine, and its purpose is that you may go on from here to share in true luxuries that will never come to an end."[25]

But perhaps the most striking Christological interpretation he gives to his own orations is how the Word becomes not only enfleshed in human form, but also verbalized in human speech. In *Or.* 37 Gregory knows that his words fail to do justice to the mystery of the Incarnation. He asks for pardon as he is speaking of the greatest things with only a limited instrument. He then regains confidence with the hope that the "manifold and long-suffering and formless and bodiless Nature will bear this, namely, my words as if of a body (*τοὺς ὡς περὶ σώματος λόγους*), and weaker than the truth." Gregory then links the Word's condescension at the Annunciation with the present moment: "For if he received flesh, may he also bear such an oration (*καὶ τὸν τοιοῦτον φερέτω λόγον*)."[26]

For Gregory, his preaching is like the body that makes known the divinity hidden within it.

The Word in Gregory's letters

Among Gregory's letters, a theology of the Word can be detected in the epistolary correspondence, both in prose and poetic forms, concerning his niece Alypiane's son Nicoboulus.[27] Gregory sets out his instructions on how to

[25] *Or.* 38.6 (SC 358.112–14); trans. Daley, 119.

[26] *Or.* 37.2 (SC 318.274); trans. Browne and Swallow, 338 (alt.). For the Word coming in both the voice and flesh of Origen, see Origen, *Homily on Genesis* 3.7. I am grateful to Brian Barrett for this reference.

[27] There are other possible studies not taken. For example, *Ep.* 66 says that an earlier letter (presumably from Basil) carries forth a blessing and shows its sender to be suffering for Christ and through Christ. The short letter concludes by noting that the sender, so close to God, brings others into relation to God by word and example. In *Ep.* 80, Gregory bemoans his sufferings: the deaths of Basil and Caesarius, poor health, old age, faithless friends, etc. He says that he is sailing in the dark and Christ is asleep. Again, one could also consider a theology of the Word through the mediatorial role exercised by Gregory's letters of recommendation in his patronage network, e.g. *Ep.* 37, 39, 157. Gregory uses a phrase spoken by Christ in John 16: 15 to begin *Ep.* 168, and says that he puts God's voice for his introduction. For a study and translation of Gregory's letters, see Storin, "The Letters of Gregory of Nazianzus: Discourse and Community in Late Antique Epistolary Culture." For a general overview of Gregory's epistolary contribution to the Byzantine tradition, see George T. Dennis, S.J., "Gregory of Nazianzus and the Byzantine Letter," in *Diakonia: Studies in Honor of Robert T. Meyer*, eds. Thomas Halton and Joseph P. Williman (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 3–13. See Chap. 4 in this volume for a detailed study of *Ep.* 101. For a suggestive brief study that pertains to letter writing in

craft a letter in *Ep.* 51, an important piece detailing matters of concision (*syntomia*), clarity (*saphēneia*), and grace (*charis*) in letter writing.[28] These characteristics can certainly be seen against Greek models for letter writing (such as in *On Style* by Demetrius), but one should also be aware of theological resonances.[29] For example, Gregory refers elsewhere to the concise Word and calls the letter-writing Apostle Paul "the herald of the concise Word" alluding to Isaiah 10: 22–23 LXX and Romans 9: 28.[30] Similarly, in *Ep.* 54, Gregory answers Nicoboulus's query about the meaning of laconic. For Gregory, to be laconic is not to write few words, but to say much in few words. He judges the length by the matter, not the letters. In his own laconic letter, he contrasts Homer as very brief with Antimachus (a much later epic poet of Colophon) as lengthy. Perhaps it is not irrelevant here to point out a comparison to the *Philocalia of Origen*. For the Alexandrian, those who speak against godliness say much, while those who speak the truth, say only one word, the Word spoken by the Father.[31] In short, one can find that Gregory's description of a good letter bears some implicit resemblance to the Word.

Furthermore, in *Ep.* 52 where Gregory answers Nicoboulus's request to publish a collection of his letters, Gregory remarks that he does so for use in the hall of Christians.[32] The significance within history should not be missed, as Gregory's effort to form an anthology of letters seems to be the first for a Greek author.[33] He says that just as a father is always visible in his child, so an author is seen in letters.[34] This could be given a Christological interpretation, linking the reader of a letter to the one seeing Christ as seeing the Father (John

Gregory's disciple Evagrius Ponticus, see Joel Kalvesmaki, "Cure of the Distressed Soul: The Consolation of Evagrius of Pontus on the Death of Gregory Nazianzus," delivered at the 2002 North American Patristics Society annual meeting, May 24, 2002. Accessed on July 1, 2009, at <http://www.kalvesmaki.com>.

[28] *Ep.* 51 (Gallay, *Lettres* 1.66–68).

[29] Cf. George L. Kustas, *Studies in Byzantine Rhetoric*, Analecta Vlatadon (Thessalonica: Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies, 1973), esp. 45–54.

[30] *Or.* 16.2 and 27.1 (SC 250.70); cf. the Son as a concise demonstration of the Father's nature in *Or.* 30.20 (SC 250.268).

[31] *Philocalia* 5.4 (Introd. to *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Book 5).

[32] *Ep.* 52.2 (Gallay, *Lettres* 1.69).

[33] See Neil B. McLynn, "Gregory Nazianzen's Basil: The Literary Construction of a Christian Friendship," *Studia Patristica* 37 (2001): 178–93, at p. 184.

[34] *Ep.* 52.3 (Gallay, *Lettres* 1.69). Cf. the analysis of *Ep.* 64 of Evagrius by Joel Kalvesmaki, "Cure of the Distressed Soul": "The extensive meditation on letter writing found in *Letter* 64 shows that Evagrius considered his correspondence to be a spiritual ministry. He crafted his words in the manner he felt the Father crafted *his* Word." For a study of the letters of Gregory and of Basil, see Chap. 8, "'Your Soul in Your Letter': The Emotional Life of Letters," in Raymond van Dam, *Families and Friends in Late Roman Cappadocia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 131–38.

14: 9).[35] But more explicitly than any of these letters, we can go to a theology of the Word in Gregory's verse epistles 4 and 5, ostensibly written between Nicoboulus and his father (also named Nicoboulus).[36]

In the letter to his father, Nicoboulus recounts an ascetic life that he has freely chosen. He has no desire for silver or gold, Chinese silks, glittering stones, land, servants and livestock, an exalted marriage, and the fleeting pleasures of life. He desires one thing above all else: the power of words—something demonstrated by the cleverness of this verse epistle.[37] Nicoboulus extols rhetoric, history, grammar, and the logical arts as what he wants to pursue. After his study in youth, Nicoboulos promises:

> I will measure my life by its divine movements, with Christ as my helper, fellow-traveler, and guide, so that I might find, when I am raised up from here with my light hopes, a pure and endless life, no longer gazing from afar upon feeble images of the truth, as if through a mirror or on the surface of the water, but rather contemplating, with eyes made holy, the truth itself, whose beginning and end is the Trinity: a divinity worshipped as one, like one light in three flashing rays, which are equally divine.[38]

Immediately after this passage, so indicative of Gregory's own life, Nicoboulus turns to acknowledge Gregory. Nicoboulus asks his father to consider his

[35] Similarly, Gregory also believes that he can send a letter in place of his physical presence, as he says in *Ep*. 125.4 (Gallay, *Lettres* 2.15), a letter sent from the baths of Xanxaris to Olympius in order to urge him to punish the Apollinarians.

[36] The blend between poetical and epistolary forms has Latin precedents, but not Greek. See Chap. 2 in Preston Edwards, "Ἐπισταμένοις ἀγορεύσω: On the Christian Alexandrianism of Gregory of Nazianzus," Ph.D. diss. Brown University 2003, 80–127 and, for his translation with the PG text, 134–54. In accepting Gregory's authorship, I follow such studies as that of Edwards, Kristoffel Demoen, *Pagan and Biblical Exempla in Gregory Nazianzen: A Study in Rhetoric and Hermeneutics*, Corpus Christianorum, Lingua Patrum 2 (Turnhout: Corpus Christianorum, 1996), 22 n. 8, and the most complete work on the texts available in *Nicobulo* jr. *al padre* [carm. II, 2, 4]*, Nicobulo* sen. *al figlio* [carm. II, 2, 5]*: Una discussione in famiglia*, introduction, critical edition, Italian translation, commentary, and appendices by Maria Grazia Moroni, Poeti Christiani 6 (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2006). Neil McLynn thinks that Gregory may have written the son's letter, but that the father himself wrote the response. See McLynn, "Among the Hellenists: Gregory and the Sophists," 235–37. For a comparable epistolary poem by Gregory exposing strife between a father (Vitalianus) and a son (Peter), see *Carm*. 2.2.3, *Ad Vitalianum*. The writer compares his father to God the Father in the exordium, a notable reversal of the metaphor according to Demoen, and should be read as literary rhetoric showcasing Gregory's mastery over the craft. See Kristoffel Demoen, "'I am a Skilful Poet': Persuasion and Demonstration in Gregory Nazianzen's *Ad Vitalianum*," in *Approaches de la Troisième Sophistique: Hommages à Jacques Schamp*, ed. Eugenio Amato, Collection Latomus 296 (Brussels: Éditions Latomus, 2006), 431–40, esp. pp. 432 and 439–40. For Demoen on the pertinent distinctions of the *personae* , see his "Gifts of Friendship that will Remain for ever: *Personae*, Addressed Characters and Intended Audience of Gregory Nazianzen's Epistolary Poems," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 47 (1997): 1–11.

[37] Cf. *Carm.* 2.2.4.58.

[38] *Carm.* 2.2.4.80–88 (Moroni, 80); trans. Edwards, 137. Cf. Augustine, *Confessions* 7.10.16–7.20.26.

mother's uncle, a great man distinguished above all by the profound words he gathered from the ends of the world which are now on everybody's lips. That great man found the ultimate key of words in Christ and an elevated life. Nicoboulus returns to this connection between words and the Word in his lengthy conclusion where he writes of the end of his word and invokes God to witness, as even God the Word rules over mortals.

In the following letter the father begins his response by explicating the theology at the heart of his son's letter:

> My child, in desiring words, you desire what is best. I myself take pleasure in words, at least in those the Lord Christ, the light of the world, has given to mortals, as a gift surpassing all others from the vault of heaven. Although he himself is called by many names, he is never happier than when he is called the "Word."[39]

The father proceeds to correct his son, to offer an elaborate encomium on words, and to bestow his paternal blessing on his son's studies: "May you have Christ as the guide of your verses, and the sound Word of life who is more excellent than any work of literature."[40] Through the voice of the father, Gregory here points to the superiority of the Word and, in the last verses, refers again to himself, as one who exemplifies the best of teachers so that one can find the depths of words and reach the highest good. Therefore, in these epistles, seemingly exchanged between two of his family members, Gregory articulates again the relationship between the Word and words—characteristically including himself as a model.

The Word in Gregory's poems

In Gregory's voluminous corpus of poetry, we have a poem of iambic trimeter entitled *Eis ta emmetra* (*In suos versus*), commonly translated "On his own verses."[41] McGuckin hypothesizes that Gregory wrote this poem as an introduction to a collection of poems that would establish him as a master of this art.[42] This poem has rightly garnered attention by scholars, largely because of its significance for understanding Gregory's poetry as a whole. Quasten

[39] *Carm.* 2.2.5.1–6 (Moroni, 174); trans. Edwards, 143.

[40] *Carm.* 2.2.5.265–66 (Moroni, 192); trans. Edwards, 154.

[41] *Carm.* 2.1.39, *In suos versus*. McGuckin argues for the title's translation of "On matters of measure." See McGuckin, "Gregory: The Rhetorician as Poet," in *Gregory of Nazianzus: Images and Reflections*, eds. Jostein Børtnes and Tomas Hägg, 193–212, at p. 195. This poem has received several English translations: Daley, 163–65; Abrams Rebillard, 346–53; White, 2–9 (with text); and Peter Gilbert, *On God and Man: The Theological Poetry of St. Gregory of Nazianzus*, Popular Patristics Series, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 153–56.

[42] McGuckin, "Gregory: The Rhetorician as Poet," 205.

suggests that Gregory intends *In suos versus* to fight Apollinarians with their own weapon of poetry, but Milovanović finds no evidence in the poem to support Quasten's position.[43] Rather, she emphasizes that in seeking to define appropriate Christian education and entertainment Gregory looked to ancient Greece and the popular culture of his day—a marked contrast to Basil's "strictly Christian" approach. While admitting that other readings are also legitimate, the following lines consider the poem from Gregory's theology of the Word, a formality not directly addressed by Milovanović.[44]

The poem begins with Gregory's reflection on opponents who write much and without measure. Their words flow easily and become nonsensical. Gregory's advice is for them to throw out every word, except those that are divinely inspired, as a calm harbor for those fleeing a storm. If only his opponents would accept what the Scriptures have offered for so many! Instead, their speech is of an empty word. Gregory then offers his own example. In contrast to the many words without measure seen above, Gregory devotes some of his works to the measures of verse—not for vainglory, or to please others who measure the measures of others. They even measure the work of God, but Gregory prays, "May the Word of God never leave me so alone!"[45]

Gregory then gives reasons for his own verses. The first is to put measure in his writing, so as not to write too much. Second, Gregory wants to lead youth, and all who enjoy words, by a delightful persuasion to better things. In saying this, Gregory is perhaps not simply giving a school exercise for children, but is leading all those beginning the path to goodness.[46] For his third reason, which one finds expressed elsewhere in Gregory's fury over Emperor Julian's restriction against Christian teaching of the classics, is to best pagans in words.[47] In fourth place, Gregory comforts himself in his illness by singing a hymn of departure for himself, like an old swan. In giving his reasons and, more broadly, in writing his verses, Gregory invites the wise to enter what lies inside—his own mind. McGuckin aptly comments, "Gregory's scrutiny of

[43] Milovanović, "Gregory of Nazianzus: Ars Poetica," 500 n. 7. Cf. Quasten, *Patrology* 3.244.

[44] Milovanović introduces her study by saying that although treatments are easily found in modern scholarship, "the full appreciation of the entire poem and its significance is still lacking." See her "Gregory of Nazianzus: Ars Poetica," 500.

[45] *Carm.* 2.1.39.32 (PG 37.1331); trans. Daley, 164. For an emendation of the Greek text to convey the sense that Gregory's opponents even measure God's work, see Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 248 n. 5.

[46] Cf. Basil's *Homily on Psalm 1*, 1–2; cf. Gilbert, "Person and Nature," 140. Peter Gilbert, "Person and Nature in the Theological Poems of St. Gregory of Nazianzus," Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1994, 140. Also, as a point of comparison, see *De vita sua* 6–10. There Gregory mentions the same sentiment of verses as a source of pleasure for the young, and then addresses the poem to those he left behind (considered as his children) in Constantinople.

[47] Gregory gives an aside about the aesthetic. Beauty lies not in those words, but in contemplation (which pagans cannot properly attain).

the soul in his verses is the pathway to knowledge of the inner self, the image of God within the illumined Christian, which will be the path to divine comprehension."[48] McGuckin points out that, unlike Augustine's search for images of the Trinity in the soul, Gregory sees that the soul is made to God's image as the Word. This makes his introspective poetry to be centered on the Word.

Moreover, as Gregory previously castigated his opponents for not clinging to the inspired words, he now resumes an attack that makes a comparison between his words and the words of the Scriptures. Much of Scripture comes measured in verse, as the wise of the Hebrew race speak. If his opponents think otherwise, let Saul, whose spirit was set free by the modes of the harp, convince them. Implicitly, Gregory is a new David who can soothe his enemies—but these opponents must not measure Gregory by their own feeble standards.[49] As in *Ep*. 51 to Nicoboulus, Gregory likens his writing to the superiority of the eagle among birds—whose flight is quite different from that of crows.

This poem provides an interesting complement to what we find at the end of *Ep*. 101 for Gregory's reasons to write poetry. In reference to the Apollinarian literary productions, Gregory sarcastically says, "But if the third testament is to be long treatises, modern psalters singing in opposition to David, and metrical gratification, we too will write psalms, and in quantity, and will versify, since we too think we have God's Spirit, if indeed the Spirit's grace and not human innovation is involved."[50] If one were to restrict Gregory's agenda to explicitly anti-Apollinarian poetry, such writing would be less than 1 percent in Gregory's collected poems.[51] Rather, Gregory may very well have in mind a greater theology of the Word that understands his own words in thousands of verses as: conformed to Sacred Scripture; inspired by the same Spirit who prompted David to sing psalms; and leading others to the Word, present in Gregory's mind, who became incarnate for his salvation and that of the human race. Indeed, Gregory may have intended his poetic theology of the Word to excel the accomplishments of Apollinarius and his father, the elder Apollinarius of Laodicea, who were renowned for translating the Scriptures,

[48] McGuckin, "The Rhetorician as Poet," 210.

[49] Cf. *Philocalia of Origen* 6.2 (*Commentaries on the Gospel according to Matthew*, vol. 2: "Blessed are the peacemakers"): "But if a reader comes who has been instructed in God's music, a man who happens to be wise in word and deed, and on that account, it may be, called *David*, which being interpreted is 'a cunning player,' he will produce a note of God's music, for he will have learned from God's music to keep good time, playing now upon the strings of the Law, now upon those of the Gospel in harmony with them, now upon those of the Prophets; and when the harmony of good sense is required he strikes the apostolic strings tuned to suit the foregoing, and, similarly, apostolic strings in harmony with those of Evangelists. For he knows that the whole Scripture is the one, perfect, harmonious instrument of God, blending the different notes, for those who wish to learn, into one song of salvation, which stops and hinders all the working of an evil spirit, as the music of David laid to rest the evil spirit of Saul which was vexing him" (trans. Lewis, 43–44).

[50] *Ep*. 101.16(73) (SC 208.68); trans. Williams and Wickham, 164.

[51] Cf. McGuckin, "Gregory: The Rhetorician as Poet," 195.

such as the Psalms, into Homeric verse and composing a body of Christian literature in classical meters. Whereas Milovanović is right that the text of *In suos versus* does not name the Apollinarians as the opposition, Gregory does have in mind those who do not follow the Scriptures, who unfairly criticize Gregory, and who write bad poetry. These are arguments he makes in *Ep.* 101 against the Apollinarians.[52] Gregory's poetic ambiguity within a vivid imagery—like that of the Psalter itself, or most good literature for that matter—allows for multiple interpretations.

THE PURIFYING WORD IN LIFE THROUGH PHILOSOPHY AND RHETORIC

By training and fame, Gregory is unquestionably a master rhetor. He studied the rhetorical arts extensively, and took up the formal profession briefly when he returned from Athens to Cappadocia. Moreover, he never abandoned his love for persuasive speech. He viewed his life as that joined to Basil's in placing words at the service of the one wise Word.[53] Gregory, of all the classically trained churchmen of late antiquity, exhibited the greatest scope, persistence, and complexity of engagement with the schools and the classical curriculum.[54] His three genres display his efforts to persuade an audience, and can be profitably studied on the basis of various rhetorical models.[55] The scholar of classical rhetoric, George Kennedy, calls Gregory "the most important figure in the synthesis of classical rhetoric and Christianity" and identifies his oration on Basil as "probably the greatest piece of Greek rhetoric since the death of Demosthenes."[56]

Gregory's enduring rhetorical achievement rests, in part, on his theological understanding of creation, which he believes exists for the sake of Christ the Word.[57] Gregory holds that human beings (and particularly himself) have a special debt to the Word for being created. Gregory's emphasis is not so much that the Father created the human being according to his Image, who is the Word, but rather that the Mind's Word shaped Gregory's form from a mixture

[52] For an analysis of *Ep.* 101, see Chap. 4.

[53] *De vita sua* 481.

[54] See McLynn, "Among the Hellenists: Gregory and the Sophists," 238.

[55] For example, George Kennedy detects influences from Plato's *Phaedrus* and Aristotle's *Rhetoric* on Gregory's treatment of the priesthood in *Or.* 2. See Kennedy's "Later Greek Philosophy and Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 13 (1980): 181–91.

[56] George A. Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 215 and 237.

[57] Cf. *Carm.* 1.1.2.51–56; trans. Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 41. Gregory argues that if God formed the Word as simply a tool so that "God might make me," then the creature would be worthier than the celestial Christ.

of things heavenly and things earthly.[58] This means that the human being resembles, in part, the Creator Word by rationality and speech—but only in part. People, by their earthly mixture, are also susceptible to sin, which drives them away from the Word, and mixes them more with things material and base.

After their sin, the Word trains people to ascend back to the Father. This training of purification, both practical and theoretical, comes through philosophy. One adept in the philosophical way of Christian faith can teach others through the persuasion of rhetoric to embrace this true philosophy: thinking and acting according to the Word. But without prior training, rhetoric, for Gregory, is just empty words. Speech must flow from an ascetical life in Christ, whereby the flesh is tamed, and the mind, united to the Word, can speak about the things of God. Gregory's brilliance in proclaiming the Word flows from an explicit avowal of living by the Word.

This chapter's section considers Gregory's resolution of the age-old strife between philosophy and rhetoric in the service of the Word. Influenced by George Kennedy, Frederick Norris calls Gregory a "philosophical rhetorician."[59] I agree with this designation, but I question Norris's description of how Gregory views philosophy and its relation to his rhetoric. Let us consider quite briefly the classical rivalry between philosophers and rhetors, and then Norris's approach from his detailed study of the *Theological Orations*. This

[58] E.g., *Carm*. 1.1.8. "On the Soul" where Gregory says that the Word with immortal hands set up *my form* (line 71). This Christological emphasis differs strikingly from the Irenaean image of God the Father creating Adam with his two hands of the Son and Spirit. Anna-Stina Ellverson notes the importance of Christ for Gregory's theological anthropology in her published dissertation, *The Dual Nature of Man: A Study in the Theological Anthropology of Gregory of Nazianzus*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Doctrinae Christianae Upsaliensia 21 (Uppsala: Almkvist and Wiksell, 1981), esp. 24–27, 79–80, 89–95. However, she does not pursue at any length Gregory's writings concerning the connection between the Logos and the human being as logical. Expressing concern that one risks being "overly Christological" and seeks rather an explicitly Trinitarian perspective, she writes in her final chapter: "In the thinking of Gregory, the second of the divine Hypostases, the Son or the Mind or Word of God, has a strong position as the creating agent as well as the incarnate God and as Saviour" (p. 89). At times, Gregory calls the Christ "Mind" (*nous*), but he usually refers to God the Father, not the Son, by this term. See, for example, Gregory's differentiation between *nous* and *logos* in *Or*. 30.20.

[59] See esp. Frederick W. Norris, *Faith Gives Fullness to Reasoning: The Five Theological Orations of Gregory Nazianzen*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 17–39. Norris says, "The most significant theme to arise out of the study undertaken for this commentary is the intricate interpenetration of philosophy, rhetoric and theology in the work of Gregory Nazianzen" (p. 17). Cf. Norris, "Of Thorns and Roses: The Logic of Belief in Gregory Nazianzen," *Church History* 53 (1984): 455–65; Norris, "The Theologian and Technical Rhetoric: Gregory of Nazianzus and Hermogenes of Tarsus," in *Nova and Vetera: Patristic Studies in Honor of Thomas Halton*, ed. John Petruccione (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1998), 84–95; and Norris, "Theology as Grammar: Gregory Nazianzen and Ludwig Wittgenstein," in *Arianism after Arius*, eds. Michel Barnes and Daniel H. Williams (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 237–49.

will serve as a basis for further research into what Gregory means by philosophy and rhetoric.

The tension between philosophy and rhetoric

Plato's *Gorgias* most famously sets up the problematic between philosophers and rhetors, or perhaps it would be better to say, the problems incumbent in the profession of a rhetor from a philosophical point of view. However, Norris quotes approvingly A. D. Nock's judgment: "There was little or no antagonism between rhetoric and philosophy under the Empire."[60] Norris concludes, "Therefore, when investigating a fourth-century C.E. figure like Nazianzen, no reason exists to employ the B.C.E. debates between philosophy and rhetoric, found in Plato's *Gorgias*, as the interpretative key."[61] Rather, Norris seeks to correct Rosemary Ruether's influential monograph on Gregory as a rhetor and philosopher. Although Ruether recognizes that Gregory loves and studies philosophers, she finds that "we would be wrong if we were to suppose that Gregory either acknowledges or is aware of any dependence of Christianity on those [philosophical] traditions."[62] Norris, on the other hand, articulates Gregory's principle concerning the use of philosophy: "Avoid the thorns; pluck the roses."[63] While castigating what was harmful in philosophy, Gregory also drew significantly from what was useful in philosophy such as principles of logic. For example, Norris follows Johannes Focken's work to show Gregory's employment of Aristotle's arguments of the enthymeme in the *Theological Orations*.[64]

Two points could nuance Norris's argument. Gregory's world includes that of Plato, and Gregory repeatedly turns to a tension between rhetoric and

[60] A. D. Nock, *Sallustius* (London 1926; [reprint Hildesheim, 1966]), p. xix; quoted in Norris, *Faith Gives Fullness to Reasoning*, 24.

[61] Norris, *Faith Gives Fullness to Reasoning*, 24.

[62] Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gregory of Nazianzus: Rhetor and Philosopher*, new printing (Lima, OH: Academic Renewal Press, 2003), 174; quoted in Norris, "Of Thorns and Roses," 455.

[63] Norris gives for his reference *Ad Seleucum* 1.61 (the source of the quotation) and *De vita sua* 472. The first is now recognized to be by Gregory's cousin Amphilochius of Iconium. See E. Oberg, *Amphilochii Iconiensis Iambi ad Seleucum*, in *Patristische Texte und Studien* 9 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1969), 29–40; at line 61. The second reference is not directly relevant to philosophy. Gregory recognizes the expression of taking roses from thorns as a proverb in his *Ep*. 173. It generally means to take the best and most beautiful things out of what is painful, evil, or useless. Cf. *Carm.* 2.1.38.35. This common expression can also be found in Basil's *Letter to the Young on the Value of Greek Literature* and Gregory of Nyssa, *Ep.* 28.

[64] Norris directs our attention to Johannes Focken, *De Gregorii Nazianzeni Orationum et Carminum dogmaticorum argumentandi ratione* (Numberg [*sic*: Nuremberg], 1912). This is Focken's inaugural Berlin dissertation, written under Norden and Diels.

philosophy in favor of the latter when the former is divorced from it. Yet, a Christian difference distinguishes Gregory's conception from the classical rivalry. Gregory transposes philosophy's traditional antagonism toward rhetoric into arguments for the "true philosophy's" superior eloquence in the Word over opponents, who merely play with words, or pretend to offer wisdom.[65] The Eunomians, the Apollinarians, and other opponents to Gregory's faith in Christ are described in the same terms as those used by philosophers to criticize rhetors. Most famously, Gregory begins his *Theological Orations* with this attack: "This is a speech against those clever in speech (*Πρὸς τοὺς ἐν λόγῳ κομψοὺς ὁ λόγος*.)."[66] Gregory's reclassification of rhetoric as a force opposing true philosophy leads us to the second point of nuance. Philosophy is not simply a matter of schools preparing truth propositions for philosophical discourse; it is—as Gregory assumes and Pierre Hadot recently demonstrates—a way of life.[67] We must return again to Gregory's own way of thinking about philosophy.

Gregory's philosophy

An excellent resource to situate Gregory's particular contribution to the meaning of philosophy comes in Anne-Marie Malingrey's study on the term *philosophia* in antiquity.[68] Malingrey finds that the word evolved as believers in Christ subsumed the ancient discourse about philosophy, a word whose meaning in earlier times was rather abstract in a vague love for wisdom or a search for all knowledge. She concludes that Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, and John Chrysostom invested their most deeply held intentions in that word. For Basil, *philosophia* is essentially cenobitic monasticism; for

[65] Writing on Gregory, John Behr says, "The longstanding tension between philosophy and rhetoric in antiquity is transformed for Christian writers, for their subject is, precisely, the Word of God, to which they must give expression in human words." See Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 332.

[66] *Or.* 27.1 (SC 250.70). Compare Gregory's condemnatory remark about those in Constantinople when he delivered his farewell: they do not seek priests, but rhetors (*Or.* 42.24 [SC 384.106]). For Gregory, rhetoric serves as a means of priestly ministry and should not be considered the end.

[67] Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, ed. with an introd. by Arnold I. Davidson, trans. Michael Chase (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1995), see esp. chap. 11 "Philosophy as a Way of Life;" and Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*

[68] Anne-Marie Malingrey, *"Philosophia": Étude d'un groupe de mots dans la literature grecque, des Présocratiques au IVe siècle après J.-C.*, Études et Commentaires 40 (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1961). A more recent study of Gregory's understanding of philosophy, with some attention to the ideal of the *imitatio Christi* as the perfection of life, is Francis Gautier, *La Retraite et le sacerdoce chez Grégoire de Nazianze*, Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études Sciences Religieuses 114 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), esp. 4, 72, and 140–42. Most recently, Elm's *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church* presents an extended argument about Gregory's philosophy in dialogue with Julian's.

Gregory of Nyssa, one of the stages of the contemplative life; for Chrysostom, the Christian life insofar as it is informed by charity. And what is it for Gregory of Nazianzus? Philosophy designates "the life of intimacy with Christ."[69] Thus in Gregory's life, philosophy means not simply a quest for abstract knowledge, but knowing the reality of a person—God come to live on earth.[70]

Malingrey points to two texts where Gregory describes philosophy in terms of the *imitatio Christi*.[71] Although not mentioned by her, Gregory, in each of the two examples, also gives a polemic against rhetoric unfounded in the deeds of life. In his first invective against Julian, Gregory catalogues various philosophers whom Julian praises and what their lives were really like: men such as Socrates whose love of beauty was love of boys disguised; Plato and his gluttony in Sicily; Crates who gave up his wealth but paraded his liberty in speaking so much that he was not a lover of wisdom, but of fame. The words of those so-called philosophers do not reflect the truth of living rightly. In contrast, tens of thousands of Christians practice philosophy their entire lives and throughout the whole world. They are believers who live in continence and endure hardships. These include not only common folk, but also persons who have given up much wealth and their station in society in order to suffer in imitation of Christ. If they have no *logos*, it is because they do not place piety in the *logos* that comes from the mouth, but rather in the blessing (*to eulogon*) and in the instruction found in deeds.[72]

Another text is from the panegyric on Basil where Gregory describes Basil's prodigious works to assist the poor. As a consequence of his philosophy, Basil is said to have given instruction not only by speaking, but also by silent action, which led many others including the rich to practice his philanthropy. But a few lines later, Gregory says that Basil attended the sick personally, and so imitated Christ, not by word, but in deed.[73] As Brian Daley explains, the Cappadocian Fathers were building a "new city," not simply through words, but through the stones of a shelter and a hospital in the new philosophy of Christian *philanthrōpia*.[74]

Such examples of Gregory's philosophy as a life of clinging to Christ the Word through deeds appear in several places. For example, in a letter to the young rhetor Eudoxius, Gregory urges him to avoid the errors of rhetoric and

[69] Malingrey, *Philosophia*, 298.
[70] Cf. Malingrey, *Philosophia*, 293.
[71] Cf. Malingrey, *Philosophia*, 292.
[72] *Or*. 4.73 (SC 309.190).
[73] *Or*. 43.63 (SC 384.264).
[74] Brian E. Daley, S.J., "Building a New City: The Cappadocian Fathers and the Rhetoric of Philanthropy," 1998 NAPS Presidential Address, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 7 (1999): 431–61. This could be seen within a wider recognition of Christianity's significant contribution to care for the poor. For a brief overview of the Christian change on Roman society's treatment of the poor, see Gillian Clark, *Christianity and Roman Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 106–11.

embrace the true philosophical life. Thrones, power, wealth, distinctions, promotions, falls, and reputation should have no influence. Gregory then proposes the course of action that should be taken: "Let us, instead, embrace the Word, and choose to have God before all things, the one all-sufficient Good available to us."[75] Similarly, Gregory spells out his understanding of the ideal philosophy: first, in his oration in praise of Maximus the philosopher, and then the subsequent oration after Gregory discovered the falsity of Maximus's life.[76] The authentic philosophical life is one offered "so you might learn to do good for Christ," Gregory says, "by doing good for one of his little ones. The reason is that just as he became everything that I am except sin, for my sake, so he accepts the least of my needs and refers them to himself."[77] Philosophy is a life of ministering to Christ in the homeless, the naked, the sick, the imprisoned, and the thirsty (cf. Matt 25: 31–46).

Gregory's rhetoric

Rhetoric, divorced from this living of true philosophy, has no virtue.[78] This leads Gregory to subordinate the word to life. For example, Gregory writes to Theodore of Tyana that the word does not persuade the people as does practice, the silent exhortation.[79] In *Or.* 19.10, Gregory urges those who live by words not to place too much confidence in their words, but rather to dedicate their words to the Word. Only in the Word do our words have significance. For a Christian to give up the practice of a life modeled on Christ to be a rhetor is, for Gregory, absurd.

This abandonment of Christian duties for rhetoric seems to have happened in the life of Gregory of Nyssa. In his *Ep.* 11, our Gregory asks the younger Gregory bluntly what happened that he "wanted to be called a rhetor rather than a Christian."[80] In this rhetorically charged letter, sprinkled with classical allusions and displaying a mastery over the literary craft, the author knows

[75] *Ep.* 178.11; trans. Daley, 183 (alt.); cf. Brian E. Daley, S.J., "Saint Gregory of Nazianzus as Pastor and Theologian," in *Loving God with our Minds: Essays in Honor of Wallace M. Alston*, ed. Michael Welker and Cynthia A. Jarvis (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 106–19, at p. 117.

[76] *Or.* 25 and 26. For Gregory's philosophical ideal with Cynicism in mind, especially in *Or.* 25, see Claudio Moreschini, "Gregory Nazianzen and Philosophy, with Remarks on Gregory's Cynicism," trans. Carol Chiodo, in *Re-reading Gregory of Nazianzus*, ed. Christopher A. Beeley, 103–22.

[77] *Or.* 26.6 (SC 284.240); trans. Daley, 109; cf. *Or.* 26.12.

[78] Gregory's complaint against rhetoric unfounded upon the good character of one's life and the truth of the matter in the words is common among other ancient writers, both Christian and non-Christian. For Augustine's comparable position, see *Confessions* 4.1.1.–4.2.2 and *On Christian Teaching* 4.

[79] Cf. *Ep.* 77.4.

[80] *Ep.* 11.4 (Gallay, *Lettres* 1.17).

that its recipient might protest and say that he has not given up the faith, and calls God as a witness. However, the author responds that it is not enough merely to persuade oneself; one must not live merely for oneself. Rather, a wise person lives for neighbors, and must persuade them. By writing this, Gregory not merely puts rhetoric beneath Christian philosophy, he also places rhetoric above philosophy as the finest expression of a Christian life. The wise one must, in the end, persuade others to find their way, as the author is not so subtly doing in this very letter. Our Gregory explains that if Gregory of Nyssa does not turn back, he is as a dead man. The author ends his letter with a note on the resurrection, praying to God who gives life to the dead.

Gregory thus understands his words in the service of the Word to purify others, making them able to experience the philosophical life and think about God. His words in preaching display a sacramental power—they effect what they signify.[81] He frequently signals a change from ordinary to sacramental reality, from everyday meaning to a deeper meaning of religious significance that elevates his audience. This change comes typically at the beginning of his speech, or in the transition between the introduction and the narration.[82] For example, in *Or.* 39, Gregory says:

> Do you see the grace of this day? Do you see the power of this Mystery? Have you not been raised up from the earth? Have you not been placed clearly on high, lifted by our voice and our instruction? You will be placed there more clearly still, if the Word gives a favorable direction to the word I speak (ἐπειδὰν εὐοδώσῃ τὸν λόγον ὁ Λόγος)![83]

Later in that same oration, he gives a typical transition, "Since we have cleansed this theatre of ours by the Word, come, let us speculate now about the feast, and let us celebrate it along with souls who love festivals, and love God."[84] In this way of purification and celebration, Gregory believes that the words take form in the lives of his hearers.[85]

In *Or.* 20, 27, and 4, we find references also to the purifying Word at work through Gregory's teaching and example for various audiences. These three discourses are chosen to show Gregory's application of a strategy to unite philosophy and rhetoric against every opposition. In *Or.* 20, the opponent is the inept bishop; in *Or.* 27, it is the Eunomian theologian; in *Or.* 4, it is Julian the Apostate. Philosophy and rhetoric, deeds that purify a speaker and words that purify the audience, support Gregory's arguments against his enemies

[81] Cf. Kustas, *Studies in Byzantine Rhetoric*, 123–24.

[82] Gregory also signals this kind of change in some orations much later. For example, Gregory offers to bear his audience up to heaven, leaving earthly things behind in *Or.* 28.28 and visible things behind in *Or.* 28.31, which is the second *Theological Oration*'s conclusion.

[83] *Or.* 39.2 (SC 358.152); trans. Daley, 128.

[84] *Or.* 39.11 (SC 358.170); trans. Daley, 132.

[85] Cf. McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 340–41.

within the orthodox Church, within heretical communities, and within the pagan world. Whether his enemies actually become purified may be out of Gregory's control, but he puts forth both his philosophical life and his powers of persuasion so that the Word may purify his listeners. As we will see, the ancient feud between rhetors and philosophers is transfigured in these passages into the rivalry between the orthodox people's leaders (such as Gregory) and all those whose words fail before the Word. By that Word, Gregory purifies his listeners.

Gregory arrived in Constantinople in 379 and may have delivered *Or.* 20, *On Theology, and the Appointment of Bishops*, there in the spring of the following year, if not earlier. It forms a sketch of themes that he develops in his *Theological Orations* and holds several passages that are also found in other orations.[86] He begins by bemoaning the *glōssalgia*, the talkativeness of those who want to be instant theologians. Gregory, on the other hand, longs for the philosophy that comes from above. Shutting off the senses and rising from the world, he seeks conversation with God, and so becomes a spotless mirror of God and divine things. But one cannot achieve the blessed end without the discipline of philosophy, whereby one becomes detached from things mingled with darkness, or without God's mercy—or both.

Gregory offers a number of scriptural allusions to indicate the purity required. The first and most elaborately developed biblical model is Moses, who moved away from the multitude and from even the select few, such as Aaron. Moses alone conversed with God on the top of the mountain (cf. Exod. 19: 3–25 and 24: 9–12). Gregory also uses the stories of Eli the priest, responsible for his son's sins, and Uzzah, who stabilized the ark when jostled by the ox, but then he himself perished due to God's punishment (cf. 1 Sam. 2: 22–36, 4: 10–18, and 2 Sam. 6: 2–8). Citing these and other examples, Gregory knows that nobody stands worthy of Christ the great God, who is both victim and high priest, unless that one has first offered oneself to God as a living sacrifice—thus implicitly becoming another Christ as both victim and priest. Because the first requirement for engaging successfully in theology is to purify oneself, Gregory turns for further scriptural testimonies of humanity's unworthiness to receive God. Like Peter and the centurion, Gregory says each should ask Jesus to withdraw, so long as we are serving as "centurions" to the world-ruler (cf. Luke 5: 8 and Matt. 8: 8). But Gregory opens for us a window of hope through his own position:

> And when I gaze on Jesus, even though I may be small in spiritual stature as Zacchaeus was, and hanging on a sycamore tree—putting to death my earthly

[86] See Justin Mossay's comments in SC 270.42–44. Mossay notes the multiple scholarly interpretations for the doublets, repetitions, and reprises, without offering any definitive conclusion, due to our ignorance concerning the text and its traditions of transmission.

> members, and treating this lowly body as a foolish thing—still I shall receive Jesus and hear him say, "Today salvation has come to this house." And I shall lay hold of salvation, and practice philosophy in a more perfect way, dispensing well what I have gathered ill—either my goods or my teaching.[87]

Gregory then signals a readiness to move to something higher. He announces that since he has purified his listener by the discourse, he may discuss the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The rhythm of Gregory's speech itself communicates the purifying Word who readies his audience to speak of the holiest reality. Relying upon Solomon's prayer, Gregory wants to be like Paul who says, "I live, now no longer I, but Christ lives in me" in order to have the higher life, not the earthly life, in contemplating and adoring the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.[88] Gregory thus prepares his people through his purifying word to think of the most wonderful of all mysteries, the Trinity.

A more celebrated example of Gregory's purification of others by his words is *Or*. 27, the first *Theological Oration*. Perhaps the best way to begin to analyze that oration is to go to the introduction of *Or*. 28, where Gregory reviews what he did in the previous one. Gregory says:

> Last time we used the word to cleanse the theologian (τῷ λόγῳ τὸν θεολόγον). We glanced at his character, his audience, the occasion and range of his theorizing. We saw that his character should be undimmed, making for a perception of light by light; that his audience should be serious-minded, to ensure that the word shall be no sterile sowing in sterile ground; that the right occasion is when we own an inner stillness away from the outward whirl, avoiding all fitful checks to the spirit; and that the range should be that of our God-given capacity. These truths were established last time and so we broke up our fallow-soil with God's furrows, not wanting to sow on thorns; we leveled off the face of the ground, impressed and impressing it with Scripture's stamp.[89]

Hence, *Or*. 27 is meant to cleanse the theologian through the necessity of philosophy before rhetoric. Gregory's opponents talk inordinately. In one of this oration's many humorous phrases, he calls them "bizarre word-jugglers."[90] They are willing to speak about the deepest mysteries of God without concern for basic rules of speaking about holy things. Gregory wants people to think about God constantly, but stop talking so much.[91] The alien elements are to be cast out from discussions, like the legion of evil spirits that possessed the herd

[87] *Or*. 20.4 (SC 270.64); trans. Daley, 100; cf. Luke 19: 1–10.

[88] Cf. *Or*. 20.5; Gal. 2: 10.

[89] *Or*. 28.1 (SC 250.100); trans. Williams and Wickham, 37; cf. Matt. 13: 5–7; Jer. 4: 3; Isa. 28: 25; Wis. 13: 13. I am correcting τοπώσαντες from the SC text with the PG reading of τυπώσαντες.

[90] *Or*. 27.1. The phrase is McGuckin's translation in his study of the first *Theological Oration* in John A. McGuckin, "St. Gregory the Comic," in *Re-reading Gregory of Nazianzus*, ed. Christopher A. Beeley, 269–76, at p. 273.

[91] Cf. *Or*. 27.4.

of swine before rushing them off to meet their deaths. In order to look inward and smooth the theologian within, like a statue, Gregory proposes an examination of conscience through describing acts of Christian philosophy.[92] He covers such aspects as commending hospitality, fraternal love, love for a husband, virginity, feeding the poor, singing psalms, nightlong vigils, penitence, mortifying the body with fasting, prayer, subordinating the dust of the body to the spirit, making life a meditation on death, mastery over the passions, being mindful of the second birth, taming swollen tempers, etc. Without such practices, no one can speak well about God.

Besides this combination of philosophy and rhetoric in opposing inept ministers and heretics, Gregory also uses it to oppose the paganism which Emperor Julian the Apostate advocated. Julian, who knew Gregory during his time in Athens, cultivated an image of being a philosopher-emperor.[93] During his reign, begun in 361 and cut short in battle on the Persian front on June 26, 363, Julian restored traditional religious practices, such as animal sacrifices. In an edict of June 17, 362 he also forbade Christians to teach Greek literature, a disastrous blow for those like Gregory who sought the Christianization of their culture. For decades after Julian's death, Christians felt obliged to answer the charges he made against the faith.[94] Gregory's campaign against the lifeless Julian in *Or*. 4, continued in *Or*. 5, sets out the Christian philosophical life.[95] Elm accurately summarizes these two orations: "They are a tour de force of classical learning, demonstrating that Gregory the Christian, inspired by Christ the *Logos*, was more Greek in his *paideia* and a better philosopher than the *Hellēn* Julian, who had declared by edict that *logoi* belonged only to those who believed in the gods of the Greeks and the Romans."[96]

Who is the audience for Gregory's double-pronged attack? Gregory follows Clement of Alexandria's *Protrepticus* in making a universal appeal. Much more than a damning speech, Gregory's words give a manifesto for the truth

[92] Cf. *Or*. 27.7.

[93] For Gregory saying that Julian knew Basil and him in Greece, see *Or*. 5.39.

[94] See Cyril of Alexandria's *Against Julian*, which preserves much of Julian's *Against the Galileans*. For a brief study on Julian's view of Christianity, see Robert L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 2d edn. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 164–96.

[95] For Susanna Elm's research on the connections between Julian and Gregory in defining philosophy, see such studies as her "Orthodoxy and the Philosophical Life: Julian and Gregory of Nazianzus," *Studia Patristica* 37 (2001): 69–85; "Historiographic Identities: Julian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Forging of Orthodoxy," *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 7 (2003): 249–66; and "Hellenism and Historiography: Gregory of Nazianzus and Julian in Dialogue," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33 (2003): 493–515. More recently, see Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, esp. pp. 147–265 for *Or*. 2, and esp. pp. 336–447 for *Or*. 4–5.

[96] Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 341. I prefer Elm's formulation to Limberis's dichotomy: "Although Gregory was quite angry over Julian's sweeping changes, his anger stemmed not from his devotion to Christ, but from his own devotion to Greek learning." See Vasiliki Limberis, "'Religion' as the Cipher for Identity: The Cases of Emperor Julian, Libanius, and Gregory Nazianzus," *Harvard Theological Review* 93 (2000): 373–400, at p. 391.

of the Christian faith amidst all the peoples, philosophies, and literatures of the known world. He begins with the Psalmist's cry: "Hear this, all you peoples; give ear, all you who dwell in the world."[97] Gregory calls upon everyone—all peoples, tribes, languages, and races; persons of each age of life, all who now live, and who will live in the future; . . . even the powers and angels of heaven! He makes special appeals to those outside the Christian faith and excludes only one kind of people—the apostates (as was Julian) who were planted in the Word only superficially. Gregory wants everyone to witness his sacrifice to God, a sacrifice of words on behalf of words that have now found their liberty in Julian's death. For after the Apostate's death, Christians are free again to claim the Greek literary heritage as their own. After these introductory paragraphs, Gregory signals that he has purified, by speech, the entire choir of his audience, who will be sanctified completely in body and soul to sing Miriam's song in triumph over Julian.[98]

Gregory's words compete against pagan speech to expose that what Julian claimed as reserved only for Greek paganism actually derives either from the common human inheritance, or from Christian truth. For example, Gregory recounts how Julian charged that Christianity is *alogos* (without reason, speech, or education).[99] With various word plays on *logos*, Gregory argues that words do not belong to the Greek religion, but to the people's common bond in society.[100] Also, Gregory finds how Julian tried to parody Christian philosophy in his attempted reform of paganism and failed; Gregory exposes the fraud with words from Plato![101] He furthermore faults his pagan opposition by not attending properly to the two philosophies—theory and practice.[102] The former is more sublime and more difficult, while the latter is more humble, yet produces greater benefit. Practice becomes a stepping-stone to theory, for it is impossible for persons not living wisely to claim wisdom. Yet, theory overflows to speech for the benefit of others.

Therefore, in the classical tension between philosophy and rhetoric, we find that Gregory subordinates rhetoric to philosophy, which he redefines as living in intimacy with Christ, and then makes rhetoric the summit of the philosophical life—persuading others to be similarly purified in their lives by the Word. In other words, purification by philosophical practice leads to contemplation in philosophical theory, which in turn spurs the rhetor in speech to purify the lives of others. In Chapter 2, one particular aspect of Gregory's

[97] Ps. 48 (49): 2.

[98] Cf. *Or*. 4.12. For Miriam as the women's songleader celebrating the destruction of Pharoah's army, see Exod. 15: 20–21.

[99] Cf. *Or*. 4.102. In this oration and elsewhere, Gregory exposes the irrationality/Christlessness of Julian's own position. For example, Gregory says that Julian hated Christ because Julian was saved by Christ. See *Or*. 42.3.

[100] *Or*. 4.106. [101] *Or*. 4.113; cf. *Timaeus* 19b. [102] Cf. *Or*. 4.113.

philosophy, attention to one's own soul, will be seen in detail through an analysis of the rhetoric of Gregory's Christomorphic autobiography.

THE SCRIPTURAL WORD PROCLAIMING LIFE

Gregory of Nazianzus has left no scriptural commentary and has only one oration dedicated to a particular scriptural passage. Yet in spite of this apparent lack of interest, Gregory proves himself to be thoroughly immersed in the words and images of the Bible, which prevails over any philosophical, cultural, or political agenda.[103] Frederick Norris argues that Gregory constructs and is constructed by scriptural verses.[104] Indeed, Gregory's writings give evidence of what he counseled at the head of his poem concerning the genuine books of Scripture: "Always be revolving in speech and in your mind upon the words of God."[105] While Gregory does admittedly borrow heavily from the classical traditions, he is a Christian rhetor who seeks to meditate on and convey the Word of God for the salvation of his soul and those around him.[106] For an epiclesis before reading Scripture, Gregory invokes the Father of Christ and recalls Christ's healing by his Incarnation and passion. He then says:

[103] Cf. Daley, "Walking through the Word of God: Gregory of Nazianzus as a Biblical Interpreter," 516. Also see Brian E. Daley, S.J., s.v. "Gregory of Nazianzus," in *Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 477–81.

[104] Frederick W. Norris, "Constructing and Constructed by Scripture," in *The Bible in Greek Christian Antiquity*, The Bible through the Ages, vol. 1, ed. Paul M. Blowers (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 149–62. Norris's interest in appreciating Gregory from a postmodern perspective can be seen also elsewhere, as in "Theology as Grammar: Gregory Nazianzen and Ludwig Wittgenstein," in *Arianism after Arius*, eds. Michel R. Barnes and Daniel H. Williams (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 237–49 and in "The Theologian and Technical Rhetoric: Gregory of Nazianzus and Hermogenes of Tarsus," in *Nova & Vetera: Patristic Studies in Honor of Thomas Patrick Halton*, ed. John Petruccione (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1998), 84–95, at p. 95.

[105] *Carm.* 1.1.12.1–2 (PG 37.472); trans. Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 85; cf. Dunkle, 34. This poem is the first of seventeen poems (1.1.12–28) translated and analyzed in Brian P. Dunkle, S.J., "Gregory Nazianzen's Poems on Scripture: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary," S.T.L. thesis, Weston Jesuit Faculty of the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, 2009. For an earlier brief study of Gregory's biblical poetry, see Roberto Palla, "Ordinamento e polimetria delle poesie bibliche di Gregorio Nazianzeno," *Wiener Studien* 102 (1989): 169–85. Paul Gallay studies *Carm.* 1.1.12's canon and finds that Gregory quotes from books not included in his list. See Gallay's "La Bible dans l'oeuvre de Grégoire de Nazianze le théologien," in *Bible de tous les temps*, vol. 1: *Le Monde grec ancien et la Bible*, ed. Claude Mondésert (Paris: Beachesne, 1984), 313–34, at pp. 316–18.

[106] See Demoen's excellent *Pagan and Biblical Exempla in Gregory Nazianzen*.

> Come now, refresh this soul of yours with words—
> Pure, godly sayings from this sacred book;
> Gaze here upon the servants of your Truth
> Proclaiming life in voices echoing heaven![107]

The Scriptures, above all else for Gregory, proclaim the new life of Christ for his people.[108]

When studying Gregory's hermeneutics, scholars have had trouble in placing him according to the poles of Alexandria and Antioch. For example, commenting on the exegesis found in *Or.* 37, Moreschini writes that Gregory's scriptural interpretation is rather free. For Moreschini, Gregory tends to imitate Origen, but excludes the triple sense of Scripture and, at times, he is more inclined to Antiochene interpretation.[109] However, the practice of dividing preachers and commentators between Alexandria and Antioch, as the most telling distinction for understanding patristic exegesis, has outlived its usefulness.[110]

More profitably, Frances Young has argued that one must look again at the non-Christian models of rhetoric and style at the disposal of the Fathers like Gregory in their formation of Christian culture. For example, Gregory would have been familiar with Menander who says, "You should not, however, quote the whole passage, since it is generally familiar and well known, but adapt it."[111] Gregory uses such a technique repeatedly—alluding to scriptural passages at a frenzied pace at times. Moreover, Young studies Gregory's use of the three common rhetorical techniques of *mimēsis* (*imitatio*), *auxēsis* (*amplificatio*), and *synkrisis* (*comparatio*) in some of his orations.[112] Since Gregory was a master rhetor, Young's work is richly suggestive of appreciating other

[107] *Carm.* 1.1.35.13–16 (PG 37.517–18); trans. Daley, 169.

[108] This thesis fits well into what Frances Young says more generally: "The Bible's principal function in the patristic period was the generation of a way of life, grounded in the truth about the way things are, as revealed by God's Word." See part 4, "The Bible and the Life of Faith," in Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*, reprint (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 216–84, esp. p. 216.

[109] SC 318.61.

[110] Cf. McGuckin, "Patterns of Biblical Exegesis in the Cappadocian Fathers: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and Gregory of Nyssa," 37. McGuckin says that the Cappadocians are simultaneously and unrepententedly Alexandrian and Antiochene.

[111] Menander, Consolatory Speech, Treatise, 2.9.413.25ff. in *Menander Rhetor*, eds. and trans. D. A. Russell and N. G. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon: Press, 1981), 162; cf. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*, 103.

[112] Of these three, Young devotes the most time to identifying different forms of *mimēsis* in patristic exegesis. For an insightful study of various *synkriseis* available, see Daniel Sheerin, "Rhetorical and Hermeneutic *Synkrisis* in Patristic Typology," in *Nova & Vetera: Patristic Studies in Honor of Thomas Patrick Halton*, ed. John Petruccione (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1998), 22–39. Among Gregory's works, Sheerin notes only *Or.* 2.97 concerning the comparison between types and truths/fulfillments in scriptural hermeneutics (p. 34). This follows Gregory's allusion to 1 Cor. 2: 13 about spiritual persons comparing (*synkrinontes*) spiritual things with spiritual terms, in *Or.* 2.96.

rhetorical techniques in Gregory's use of Scripture, such as the *gorgieia schēmata* and the *ekphrasis*.[113] Her approach can help us see how Gregory persuades others to find in Scripture the proclamation of life that pierces heaven itself.

For a brief look into Gregory's understanding of the biblical Word, we will consider three texts, each with a different theological focus and literary purpose. The first is Gregory's poem *On the Testaments and the Coming of Christ* where he offers a panoramic vision of salvation history as recorded in Scripture. For a close-up account of a biblical text, we will next consider how Gregory preaches in *Or*. 37 on the first two verses of Matt. 19: 1–12. The third treats the funeral oration on Gregory's sister, Gorgonia, for an example of living Scripture, especially in the experience of virtues and prayer, and of Christ's response through miracles. By this threefold encounter with Gregory's use of Scripture, we hope to come to an appreciation of his hermeneutical method, as rooted in the application of the Word to his life and to the lives of his hearers.

A panoramic vision of the biblical Word for Gregory's life

In the last of the eight *Poemata Arcana*, *On the Testaments and the Coming of Christ*, Gregory begins by asking his reader to consider the *logos*, or reason, for the twofold law.[114] By doing so, Gregory approaches the very significance of salvation history as witnessed in the Old and New Testaments. The duality of covenants is not due to God leading humans by fractious or vacillating teachings, for the Word is skilled in all things. Rather, Gregory's account, or *logos*, of God's loving assistance considers the need the human race has had

[113] The rhetorical technique of *gorgieia schēmata* gives a rhythmic parallelism and the *ekphrasis* paints a description. For use in Gregory, see Marcel Guignet, *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze et la rhétorique* (Paris: Alphonse Picard et Fils, 1911), 106–30 and 187–210.

[114] I am assisted by Peter Gilbert's translation and commentary found in "Person and Nature," 487–517 and by the work of C. Moreschini and D. A. Sykes in *St. Gregory of Nazianzus, Poemata Arcana*, ed. with a textual introduction by C. Moreschini; introduction, translation, and commentary by D. A. Sykes; English translation of textual introduction by Leofranc Holford-Strevens, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 41–47 and 251–64. In this work, Sykes changes his mind about what he expressed earlier and says that the addendum of 60 lines following line 18 do not belong there. For his earlier position, see his "The *Poemata Arcana* of St. Gregory Nazianzen," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 21 (1970): 32–42 and "The *Poemata Arcana* of St. Gregory Nazianzen: Some Literary Questions," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 72 (1979): 6–15. However, Sykes still considers these lines to be genuine lines of Gregory's authorship. Gilbert takes note that the 60 lines are an addendum, but treats them as he does the rest of the poem. As the addendum does give more of an understanding of Gregory's use of Scripture, I use it. For an overview of this set of "poems on ineffable mysteries," see Brian E. Daley, S.J., "Systematic Theology in Homeric Dress: *Poemata arcana*," in *Re-reading Gregory of Nazianzus*, ed. Christopher A. Beeley, 3–12.

since the Evil One cast Adam out from the garden, and wreaked havoc on Adam's children. It is a kind of divine pedagogy for the human race which needed incremental assistance. In making his argument, Gregory runs through the Bible not merely as a written book, but as episodes in the lives of history: Adam and the fall; the turn to idolatry; the division of languages at Babel; the flood of Noah's time; the showers of fire on Soddom and Gomorrah; the exodus from Egypt; the giving of the Law, the prophets and kings of Israel; the miraculous birth of Christ; his obedience to the law; his Epiphany to the Magi; the call of the Gentiles to holiness to prompt the Chosen People, through envy, to return to the Lord; the double gift of the Spirit and of the blood poured out for the human race; and the gift of baptism. The testaments tell the sacred story, which finds its center in Christ.

In this poem, Christ the King is like the father who straightens out the newly formed ankle of a child's tender foot by gradual exercises and with sweet encouragement.[115] Christ does this for the human race, injured by the devil's evil schemes that crippled the human race by turning them away from God and toward the stars and idols of creatures. Christ removed the pagan idolatry, but allowed for burnt offerings for the time (in the Law). He removed those, too, by his own coming. When he does come, he comes as the Father's Child who received the inheritance which the Law had overseen. And what is the inheritance? Gregory says, *me*![116]

Gregory speaks of how Christ had set a piece of heaven in the human body at the time of creation. Injured by evil, the human race needed a stronger remedy than simply aids. He then says in lines of *gorgieia schēmata*:

> But, emptying himself
> Of his glory as the immortal God the Father's motherless Son,
> He appeared for me himself, without a father, a strange Son;
> Yet no stranger, since from my own kind came this immortal, having being made
> Mortal by a virgin mother, so that the whole of him might save the whole of me.[117]

Gregory then goes into detail about Christ's composition; Christ is God who came to be as one created later with us. One God out of both, for the human is mixed into the Godhead, and because of the Godhead exists as Lord and Christ. Like other interpreters indebted to Paul, such as Irenaeus, Gregory sees Christ as the New Adam.[118] Gregory's particular contribution is to affirm his own original identity with the old Adam, with whom the New Adam now comes to envelop in his healing:

[115] Cf. *Carm.* 1.1.9. addendum, 34–44.
[116] Cf. *Carm.* 1.1.9. addendum, 45–47.
[117] *Carm*. 1.1.9.39–43 (Sykes and Moreschini, 42, 44); trans. Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 72 (alt.).
[118] See Rom. 5: 12–21; 1 Cor. 15: 45–49; and *Adversus Haereses* 3.22.3–3.23.8.

> It is as though another, new Adam, appearing to those on earth,
> And cloaked round with a shawl, should heal the former one
> (For I could not draw close, because of my passions),
> And trip up unexpectedly the seeming-wise snake
> Who, approaching this Adam, met up with God,
> Thinking to carry him off through the force of his wickedness,
> Like the ocean that breaks on a hard and jagged rock.[119]

As Gregory does frequently, the Incarnation and the cross are paired not only for their general salvific value, but also for their effectiveness in saving him.[120] The blood that *Christ my God* shed was *mine*, says Gregory.[121]

One ought to take special note of how Gregory ends *On the Testaments and the Coming of Christ*. Gregory concludes by speaking of the common gift. He says that if he were someone invincible, he would have needed only the one commandment (given in the garden to Adam), which would have saved him and raised him to great honor. But since God did not make him a god by creation, he could go in two directions—and God was there to support him when he failed. God gave baptism, prefigured in the anointing of blood which saved the Hebrews on the night when the first-born of the Egyptians perished. Baptism is a seal for Gregory, a seal for children and for adults, from Christ the giver of light. Returning to the imagery of walking, Gregory says baptism was given so that he might turn his two feet back again towards life. Just as the air, the earth, and the heaven are common, common, too, is baptism given to save the human race. While Christ is the center of the testaments, the baptismal life is the *telos*, putting into effect the story of salvation written for all of humanity.

Preaching on Matthew 19: 1–2

Moving from this macrovision of the meaning of the Scriptures, we turn to *Or.* 37, a sermon on marriage and celibacy springing from Gregory's reading of Matt. 19: 1–12, in which some Pharisees ask Jesus about the legality of divorce in order to test him. In reply to this and subsequent questions, Jesus recalls the description of male and female in Genesis, interprets the reason that Moses allowed divorce, forbids divorce (with one exception), and then gives a threefold distinction among eunuchs, saying that whoever can renounce marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven ought to accept it. Perhaps

[119] *Carm.* 1.1.9.53–69 (Sykes and Moreschini, 44); Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 73. Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Catechetical Oration* 26.

[120] For more analysis of the mysteries of the life of Christ, see Chap. 5.

[121] *Carm.* 1.1.9.80 (Sykes and Moreschini, 46). Brian Daley comments, "Christ's life and death, Gregory repeatedly emphasizes in this poem, is all 'for my sake.'" See Daley, "Walking through the Word of God," 520. To support his observation, Daley refers to lines 26, 43, 69, 78–81, 93–95.

it is not accidental that the unique exegetical work from Gregory discusses a Gospel passage so perfect for his oft-commented theme of the states of life.[122] As for its preached setting, McGuckin thinks that Gregory delivered this oration in December 380 in the Holy Apostles church, but that it was not a generically addressed church homily. Rather, Gregory may have preached this before Emperor Theodosius as part of a chancery meeting to persuade him to revise marriage legislation.[123] Gregory wants to decry abuses in the law, particularly in legislation making women unequal in divorce matters. Moreover, it always seems that Gregory's occasional pieces have yet a wider audience in mind. In this case, his preaching touches upon people of various walks of life and has—in its present form, at least—a much broader appeal than the imperial chancery.

An analysis of Gregory's ministry concerning marriage and virginity in this oration is deferred to Chapter 6, but here we explore the oration's introductory chapters for a hermeneutical study. Norris comments, "Nazianzen uses the first five sections of the homily, not to set the stage from the biblical text, but to detail his community's confession of who Jesus Christ is."[124] This disjuncture skews a proper interpretation of Gregory's homiletic exegesis. Gregory not only sets the stage for Matt. 19: 3–12 in the opening chapters, he is interpreting the first two verses of the Gospel passage: "When Jesus finished these words, he moved from Galilee and went to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. And great crowds followed him, and he healed them there" (Matt. 19: 1–2). These words prompt Gregory to consider the meaning of Christ's mission of healing the multitude as recorded in the Gospel. Jesus, who chose fishermen, also casts out a net and passes from place to place (*topous ek topōn*). Not explicitly highlighted in Gregory's text, this theme of movement is especially appropriate here, as Matthew writes in 17: 24 that Jesus and his disciples came to Capernaum (near the Sea of Galilee) and the sea figures in Christ's teachings before 19: 1, when he moves again.[125] Gregory interprets Jesus' saving mission

[122] See in the *Carmina moralia* esp. *Carm.* 1.2.1, "In praise of virginity;" *Carm.* 1.2.8, "A comparison of lives;" and *Carm.* 1.2.17, "Blessings of various kinds of life." Cf. discussion of Chap. 6.

[123] McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 332.

[124] Norris, "Gregory Nazianzen: Constructing and Constructed by Scripture," 157. Does Norris mean to include section 5? Gregory moves on to interpret Matt. 19: 3 after the first sentence of section 5. McGuckin also does not see the relation of Gregory's preaching to the first two verses of the passage. He says that Gregory begins his consideration with the wider Gospel context, starting first with Christ's law. After several insightful comments, McGuckin continues, "As the starting point in the biblical text Gregory focuses on the pharisaic question to Jesus about the legitimate reasons for divorce, a question he regards as a 'tempting' of Jesus, since it is impertinent to ask the maker of marriage, the creative generator of all humankind, such paltry, narrowly focused questions." See McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 333. McGuckin points to section 5, and thus he seems to miss that the first four sections deal with an interpretation of Matt. 19: 1–2.

[125] Cf. Matt. 17: 27 and 18: 6.

for the vast crowds who followed him through a Pauline principle. He became all things to all that he might gain all (cf. 1 Cor. 9: 19–22).[126] What even Paul could not endure, the Savior suffered. Christ became not only a Jew, but he also took to himself the names that are most out of place or absurd (*atopōn*), such as sin itself and curse itself (cf. 2 Cor. 5: 21 and Gal. 3: 13). He did this in humility, which produces exaltation, as he condescended to all things and endured all things. Himself a fisherman, Christ cast out a net to draw up from the depths the fish (which is the human) swimming in the unsettled and bitterly salty waves of life.[127]

Gregory further explores Christ's movement from Galilee (where the people who sat in darkness may see a great light of knowledge) to Judea (so that Christ may persuade the people to arise from the letter and follow the Spirit).[128] Christ's own spatial accommodation thus saves all people, both Gentile and Jew, through the light "of knowledge," a detail not mentioned in the texts of Isaiah and Matthew, and given through Gregory's own spiritual reading of the Scriptures. Christ's very presence sanctifies not just physical places in the Holy Land, but all of human life, even its less edifying actions. Christ goes to sleep to bless sleep. He is tired in order to hallow weariness. He cries so that tears may be holy. This leads Gregory to give his confession of faith in Jesus. Christ is the timeless, the bodiless, the uncircumscribed, the one with God who was God (cf. John 1: 1). But what he was, he laid aside; what he was not, he assumed, not becoming two, but deigning to be one made out of two.

At the beginning of *Or.* 37.3, Gregory quotes Matt. 19: 2. How are great crowds able to follow Jesus and receive his healing? It is because, with reference to verse 1, Christ moved to another place. He condescended to our infirmity. If he had remained where he was, perhaps only a few (or perhaps only Moses who with difficulty saw the "back parts" of God) could follow the Son of God. But by emptying himself, by changing "places," the uncontained/incomprehensible one becomes contained/comprehensible (*chōrētos*).

Because of this, some people confuse Christ with a mere creature. Here Gregory takes advantage of the standard rhetorical technique of a digression, where he includes a confession of faith directed to Christ himself.[129] The point

[126] The Greek manuscripts of 1 Cor. 9: 21 differ on whether Paul says that he becomes all things to all so as to save at least some or to save all. In any event, Gregory is clear, when referring to this passage, that Jesus does something greater than Paul. For another application of 1 Cor. 9: 21, where Gregory does not know if he has saved all or lost them, see *Or.* 42.24.

[127] Elsewhere Gregory prays, "But when you judge the catch, dividing it in half/ May you not cast me far away, as though a useless fish." See *Carm.* 1.1.27.29–30 (PG 37.500); trans. Dunkle, 55.

[128] *Or.* 37.2 (SC 318.272); cf. Isa. 9: 1 (LXX), Matt 4: 15–16, 2 Cor. 3: 6. Gregory's spiritual interpretation of geography, reminiscent of Origen, is found elsewhere in his own works (e.g. *Or.* 20.2). Here Gregory emphasizes that the people are moved by Christ's persuasion, rhetoric's goal.

[129] Cf. *Or.* 37.4. Gregory recognizes it as a digression at the beginning of *Or.* 37.5.

of the digression is to understand how the multitude (both in the Gospel text and those who listen to Gregory's preaching) can be healed by the one they follow. Christ is described in the same way that Paul describes love: he bears all things, endures all things (1 Cor. 13: 7). Christ suffered blows; he endured spittings; he tasted gall *for the sake of my taste*, says Gregory. After returning to the limits of language in theological discourse, Gregory then asks for pardon and speaks to Christ in a series of identifications, beginning with Christ as Word and above word. Christ is Light, Fire, Sword, Fan, Ax, Door, Way, Sheep, High Priest, and Son. As the Word's herald who receives a share in the Word's sufferings, Gregory then becomes like John the Baptist, the voice of one crying in the desert, but a desert now exceedingly populated. Perhaps this latter remark, reminiscent of chapter 14 of *The Life of St. Anthony* where the desert is said to have become a city of those who left their own people in order to be enrolled as heaven's citizens, reminds his listeners that they themselves are the multitudes following Jesus and receiving his healing.

These introductory sections prepare the reader for the lengthy teachings concerning the married and celibate states and Gregory's primary moral lesson in this sermon: everyone is to cut off all passion, both bodily and spiritual.[130] In fact, to root out all the heresies of Arius and Sabellius is greater than cleansing the body. One thing on which Gregory insists, is to follow the Image and stand in awe of the Archetype.[131] To modern eyes, Gregory's concluding appeal for action to uphold Trinitarian teaching may seem worlds away from the Gospel text, but this is what Gregory actually does see as most needed when he reads and interprets the Gospel for the people in Constantinople. No matter what state of life a Christian has, it is to be a life following Christ for the glory of the Trinity. That is what the Scriptures teach.

Performing the Gospel life

For the third example of biblical exegesis, we turn to an example of epideictic oratory wherein Gregory draws upon Scripture liberally in sketching the shape of a human life. The usual method in his showcase speech is to choose persons who bear special significance for his own life: his sister, Gorgonia; his brother, Caesarius; his father, the elder Gregory of Nazianzus; Basil in terms of the dominating friendship of his life; St. Cyprian as his favorite martyr (although he confuses Cyprian of Carthage with another martyr); St. Athanasius, his model pastor and theologian (especially when the Egyptians are in

[130] Cf. *Or*. 37.22. For further Christological analysis of this oration concerning Gregory's ministry to the married and virgins, see Chap. 6.

[131] Also, in *Or*. 37.23 Gregory bids those to whom God has given power to come to the aid of the Word, and then mentions that his own word would not do as much as an edict.

Constantinople); and Julian, nemesis to his life and that of all Christians. In all these portraits, we come into Gregory's world where, by his frequent scriptural allusions, we learn about the virtues he praises, the evil he scorns, and the morals he adduces for the salvation of his audience. In Gregory's funeral oration on his sister Gorgonia, for example, we have a shining example of performing the Gospel life.[132]

Gregory punctuates the text describing Gorgonia's life with various scriptural allusions and references to her conformity to the Word. She (and Gregory, of course) came from parents who are a latter-day Abraham and Sarah. Yet, her true native land was the Jerusalem above, where Christ is citizen and his fellow citizens contemplate his glory, circling around him in an endless dance.[133] In *synkrisis*, he recounts the praises from the Book of Proverbs of the modest and industrious woman's household activities.[134] Gorgonia exceeds such a description, which would be like praising a statue on the basis of its shadows. Coming to the greater things, Gregory asks if anybody else was so open to God's Word.[135] What is said of Job's generosity to the poor could be said of her.[136] Gorgonia was not only more courageous in Christian philosophy than other women, but also more than noble men. In stringing together virtue after virtue in which no man or woman could surpass her, Gregory—through *auxēsis*—moves towards a new description of her Christian qualities, by recalling her thoughtful way of chanting the psalms and in her reading, explanation, and recall of Sacred Scripture.[137] Amid another long series of extolling the wonders of his sister's philosophy, he refers to her sleepless nights filled with psalmody.[138]

Gregory relates two parallel scenes of an accident and a mysterious grave illness that are particularly significant in the scriptural interpretation of Gorgonia's life.[139] In the first *ekphrasis*, Gregory sees a fulfillment of Hos. 6:

[132] I borrow this phrase from Lawrence S. Cunningham, *Francis of Assisi: Performing the Gospel Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004). Frances Young offers a patristic-based theology of what performing the Scripture means. See esp. her *The Art of Performance: Towards a Theology of Holy Scripture* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1990). In her *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*, Young says, "Scripture has to be performed" (p. 271). For studies on Gregory's oration on his sister, see esp. three studies in *Gregory of Nazianzus: Images and Reflections*, eds. Jostein Børtnes and Tomas Hägg: Tomas Hägg, "Playing with Expectations: Gregory's Funeral Orations on his Brother, Sister and Father," 133–51; Virginia Burrus, "Life after Death: The Martyrdom of Gorgonia and the Birth of Female Hagiography," 153–70; and Susanna Elm, "Gregory's Women: Creating a Philosopher's Family," 171–91. Elm writes, "Family and its human ties were for him [Gregory] of profound value: they were the constituent factors of his very self as a philosopher. This was not least because as a philosophical family his parents, siblings and children [Gregory's faithful flock] all played their distinct role for Gregory as the messenger of the Logos" (p. 191). Also, see the insightful treatment on *Or.* 8 in Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*, 105–10.

[133] Cf. *Or.* 8.6. [134] Cf. *Or.* 8.9; Prov. 31: 10–31.

[135] Cf. *Or.* 8.9. [136] Cf. *Or.* 8.12; Job 31: 32 and 29: 15–16.

[137] Cf. *Or.* 8.13. [138] Cf. *Or.* 8.18. [139] Cf. *Or.* 8.15–18.

2: "He will strike, but he will bind the wounds and heal, and after three days he will raise up."[140] Runaway mules caused her carriage to suffer a horrendous wreck, crushing Gorgonia's body. She longed for the presence of the one Physician who allowed the accident to occur. Everybody knew of the accident, and her miraculous recovery became even better known than the accident. But in the second *ekphrasis*, concerning the strange sickness that included high fever and paralysis, few knew. Gregory feels it is his duty to make known for God's glory and the comfort of others the miracle that took place.

Gregory proceeds to recount a paradigmatic prayer of Gorgonia's, a favorite technique in his spiritual writing. He took full advantage of the *paradeigma*, a common technique in ancient rhetoric evoking a historical event or person pertinent to the story and used in illustration.[141] Like the prayers in Homer reminding a god of past favors for present action, Gregory uses these prayers to actualize scriptural petitions and miracles. Moreover, they instruct the readers about how to continue to experience the divine power described in the miracle. Typical of Gregory's paradigmatic prayers, the recipient of Gorgonia's prayer is not simply God, but more specifically, Christ.

Giving up on all doctors, Gorgonia was able to go to the altar in the middle of the night and call out to Christ, naming him by all the titles he is called. She reminded him of his past miracles. By these actions, Gregory considers her to be like a scribe of the kingdom of heaven, bringing forth things old and new (cf. Matt. 13: 52). She then imitates two women in the Gospel. Gregory says that she was like the woman with a hemorrhage who touched the fringe of Christ's cloak and, like the woman bathing Christ's feet with her weeping, Gorgonia drenched the altar with abundant tears (cf. Mark 5: 25–34 and Luke 7: 36–50). In her boldness, Gorgonia threatened not to let go of the altar before she was cured. Finally, she applied the sacrament of the precious body and blood over her whole body, a medicine mixed with her own tears.[142] Upon this contact with Christ, she sensed that she was immediately healed.

Scripture figures prominently as well at Gorgonia's death. When she already seemed without breath, Gorgonia was found to be whispering psalmody. Gregory declares blessed anyone who goes to rest with the Psalmist's words, "In peace, all at once, I will lie down and sleep."[143] The psalm both described what happened and became an epitaph after her departure. Gregory, coming

[140] *Or.* 8.16 (SC 405.280). The last words of Gregory's rendering simplify the LXX text.

[141] Kristoffel Demoen, "The Paradigmatic Prayer in Gregory Nazianzen," *Studia Patristica* 29 (1997): 96–101. Demoen points to comparable uses of paradigmatic prayers in Gregory's prose in *Or.* 18.28 and 43.7, the latter of which he analyzes.

[142] McGuckin comments, "At one stroke she [Gorgonia] has invaded the holy of holies of the church where the non-ordained were not supposed to tread, and dispensed with the clergy by ministering illegitimately to herself (perhaps while still a catechumen)." See McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 29.

[143] Cf. *Or.* 8.22; Ps. 4: 8/9.

to the end of his oration, at last now speaks directly to his sister: "How well you have come to peace after all your sufferings, receiving the sleep due the beloved, as well as our common sleep of death! This was only fitting for you, who have lived and died with the words of piety on your lips!"[144]

In Gregory's understanding, Gorgonia is more than simply devoted to the sacred page; her life is lived as if it enacts what the Scriptures say.[145] The Scriptures are written into her life, and her life is written into the Scriptures. Brian Daley concludes his study of Gregory as a biblical interpreter with this remark:

> The reason Scripture is so important, in Gregory's view, is that it is about us, that its words are meant to touch and change our lives. The narrative of Scripture, like the history of the Church which has received it as the norm of its thinking and preaching, is really the story about each of us; it is the story of "my Jesus," whose life and whose death are "for *me*," the story of the Spirit sent to make *me,* and all of us, holy. [Original emphases][146]

Whether Gregory conveys the general scope of Scripture, interprets a biblical passage, or quotes Scripture as a support for an argument, he does, indeed, have in mind the power of the Word's salvation for individual lives.

THE WORD BETWEEN TRINITARIAN AND CHRISTOLOGICAL READINGS OF SCRIPTURE

A fundamental question remains for Gregory's theology of the Word pertaining to his scriptural hermeneutics. How does one read the Bible concerning this same Word in two respects—as begotten of the Father, who together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is God, *and* as "made flesh" for the salvation of the human race? In other words, how does one learn to read about Christ in the Scriptures for a proper sense of "theology" and of the "economy"?[147] To answer this question, we must bridge the modern disciplines of Trinitarian theology and Christology, as well as reorient both disciplines to being fundamentally derivative of the Scriptures. The developments in the early Church concerning the doctrines on the Trinity and Christ are mutually illuminative

[144] *Or.* 8.22 (SC 405.296); trans. Daley, 75.

[145] Cf. Demoen, "The Paradigmatic Prayer in Gregory Nazianzen," 101.

[146] Daley, "Walking through the Word of God," 531. For the quotation of "my Jesus," Daley notes the examples of *Or.* 37.4 and 39.1.

[147] For the variety of uses of these terms in Gregory and scholarly interpretations, see Eric Osborn, "Theology and Economy in Gregory the Theologian," in *Logos: Festschrift für Luise Abramowski zum 8. Juli 1993*, eds. Hanns Christof Brennecke, Ernst Ludwig Grasmück, and Christoph Markschies (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993), 361–83.

because they both reflect on the same mystery from different perspectives.[148] Only in Gregory's Trinitarian theology can his Christology be understood, and vice-versa.[149] Gregory's theology is a theology of the divine economy, and Gregory understands the economy to be the expression of theology for our salvation.[150]

To put this concern in the perspective of the fourth century, the Trinitarian/Christological debates of the fourth century arose because of difficulties in understanding the Son's identity, as revealed in the biblical plan of salvation for the human race. The presbyter Arius (whom Bishop Alexander and his successor in Alexandria, Athanasius, ardently opposed) escalated previous tensions and unleashed an extraordinarily complex struggle for rightly articulating Christian faith in God.[151] From Gregory's engagement in this debate, ecclesial traditions and modern scholarship have privileged the five *Theological Orations* to be the definitive exposition of his Trinitarian theology. The over-reliance on those orations has been recently and persuasively challenged, as Gregory offers a much broader range in his Trinitarian theology (similar to the enormous breadth of his Christology).[152] Granting that breadth, we undertake a more modest attempt to focus on Gregory's theology of the Word in *Or.* 29–30. For Gregory, only a purified theologian, established in God the incarnate Word (like Moses protected in the rock when God's glory passed), can attain knowledge of even the "back parts" of God.[153] Thus, it may

[148] For a proposal on the connections between early Trinitarian and Christological debate whose title is inspired by Gregory's *Ep.* 101, see Brian E. Daley, S.J., " 'One Thing and Another': The Persons in God and the Person of Christ in Patristic Theology," *Pro Ecclesia* 15 (2006): 17–46. Daley tests the thesis of a reverse proportion in that those who emphasized the threeness of God stressed the oneness of Christ whereas those who emphasized the oneness of God stressed the twoness of Christ. Daley finds that the three Cappadocian Fathers are rather difficult to identify as belonging to either extreme due to their careful constructions (p. 43). I agree that Gregory avoids the extremes, but I would add that he seems to lean more toward the twin emphasis of God's threeness and Christ's oneness than the alternative twin emphasis.

[149] Beeley aptly remarks: "Gregory's doctrine is both Christocentric and focused on the entire Trinity at the same time." He continues, "[T]o regard these two conceptualities as divergent theological positions is to miss the point of both" (*Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 227).

[150] Beeley offers a clearer argument than Osborn's "Theology and Economy in Gregory the Theologian." See Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 194–201.

[151] Three recent illuminating studies on the dynamics in Trinitarian theology in the century after Nicaea are: Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); John Behr, *Formation of Christian Theology*, vol. 2: *The Nicene Faith*, parts 1–2 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), see esp. 325–408 for Behr's analysis of Gregory of Nazianzus; and Khaled Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011).

[152] Cf. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 189–190.

[153] Cf. *Or.* 28.3; Exod. 33: 21–23. For an interesting analysis of *Or.* 28.3 with scant mention of the Incarnate Word's importance, see Dragoș A. Giulea, "The Divine Essence, that Inaccessible

not be surprising that Gregory's orations on the Son assume such a central and dominating position within the *Theological Orations*.[154]

Gregory's exegesis on the Son

Donald Winslow, who has written an acclaimed book on Gregory's soteriology, says elsewhere that Gregory of Nazianzus, like Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, was "seriously embarrassed when confronted by the Gospel portrait of Jesus."[155] For the Cappadocians, according to Winslow, "[D]eity might very well be associated in, around, and with humanity, but—and here is the great watershed between hellenic thought and the evangelical witness—never could deity be expressed *as* humanity" [original emphasis].[156] A particular example of Winslow's objection comes in the Cappadocian belief that "the incarnate birth had to take place miraculously, without copulation."[157]

Winslow's accusation against Gregory of falsifying the Gospel's teaching on the Son can invite us to consider the reality of Gregory's original polemical context against the Eunomians, those understood to be mainly targeted in *Or.* 29 and 30. The Eunomians, too, raise the charge against Gregory that he is not faithful to the Scriptures. As he announces at the beginning of the first *Theological Oration* on the Son, Gregory is expounding his own position

Kabod Enthroned in Heaven: Nazianzen's *Oratio* 28,3 and the Tradition of Apophatic Theology from Symbols to Philosophical Concepts," *Numen* 57 (2010): 1–29.

[154] We considered the introductory *Or.* 27 against the Eunomians above. *Or. 28* is named *Peri Theologias* in the manuscripts, which are dated no earlier than the ninth century. See Norris, *Faith Gives Fullness to Reasoning*, 106; cf. SC 250.100. George Kennedy, to mention just one scholar, calls *Or.* 28 a sermon on the Father. See his *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors*, 224–27. However, Gregory says in *Or.* 28.1 that the oration's subjects are the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Much of the oration deals with what cannot be said about God and what can be said through a theology of creation.) Moreover, one should not simply assume that every undifferentiated reference to "God," without additional identification of the Son or the Holy Spirit, is necessarily the Father for Gregory. In *Or.* 38.8 and *Ep.* 101.14(68) he is explicit that God means the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Finally, after the two orations on the Son, *Or.* 31 is on the Holy Spirit and how to think of the Trinity when properly considering the Holy Spirit to be God.

[155] Donald F. Winslow, "Christology and Exegesis in the Cappadocians," *Church History* 40 (1971): 389–96, at p. 395. For a very different assessment on Gregory's scriptural reading for Christology, see Thomas A. Noble, "Gregory Nazianzen's Biblical Christology," in *Interpreting the Bible: Historical and Theological Studies in Honour of David F. Wright*, ed. A. N. S. Lane (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1997), 1–28. Noble concludes: "[Gregory's] opposition to Arianism, the denial of the Lord's full deity, and his opposition to Apollinarianism, that brilliant and subtle hypothesis which thought it secured the unity of his person by compromising his full humanity, were both based in his intuitive grasp of the unity and coherence of biblical christology" (p. 28).

[156] Winslow, "Christology and Exegesis in the Cappadocians," 396; cf. Winslow, *Dynamics of Salvation*, 93–94.

[157] Winslow, "Christology and Exegesis in the Cappadocians," 396.

and refuting that of his opponents.[158] Moreover, in selecting a few aspects of his argumentation, we must be careful not to detract from Gregory's rhetorical power to persuade, not only by the force of his particular arguments, but by the cumulative effect of a winning speech.

Like Athanasius in his *Contra Arianos*, Gregory attacks his opponents for not properly distinguishing what things can be attributed to the Son from the Scriptures in different respects: as the eternal Word of God (in theology) and as incarnate (in the economy). Gregory presents his principle of differentiation as something rather simple. Yet, in a way characteristic of his style, he states it a number of times, with slightly different expressions. He says, "In sum: you must predicate the more sublime expressions of the Godhead, of the nature which is superior to things of the passions and bodies, and the lowlier ones of the compound, of him who because of you was emptied, was made flesh (and to use equally valid language) was made human."[159] Gregory then recalls that Christ was exalted, so that Gregory's opponents may put away earthbound opinions and rise up with the Godhead, not lingering over things visible, but rising up to spiritual realities: "that you might know which term pertains to his nature, and which term to the economy (*τίς μὲν φύσεως λόγος, τίς δὲ λόγος οἰκονομίας*)."[160] At the beginning of the second *Theological Oration* on the Son, Gregory suggests the solution of "allocating the more elevated, the more distinctly divine expressions of Scripture to the Godhead, the humbler and more human to the New Adam for our sake and God made passible to oppose sin."[161] Later in that oration, he says, "Whatever we come across with a causal implication, we will attribute to the humanity; and what is simple and without cause, we will reckon to the divinity."[162]

Because of these statements, some have been quite concerned about how Gregory considers the oneness or the twoness of Christ. In doing so, Gregory's principle has been at times mistranslated or misstated.[163] Christopher Beeley handles the evidence better than others, emphasizing a unity that has often been neglected by scholars in explicating Gregory's interpretation of the scriptural witness.[164] Here is one example. In *Or*. 29.17–21 alone, Gregory quotes well over 100 scriptural passages concerning Christ's identity, and classifies them into various groups. *Or*. 29.20, in particular, presents a tour

[158] *Or*. 29.1. Beeley expounds how defensive Gregory's posture is. See *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, esp. 39–40 and 190.

[159] *Or*. 29.18 (SC 250.216); trans. Williams and Wickham, 86 (alt.).

[160] *Or*. 29.18 (SC 250.216).

[161] *Or*. 30.1 (SC 250.228); trans. Williams and Wickham, 93 (alt.).

[162] *Or*. 30.2 (SC 250.228); trans. Williams and Wickham, 94 (alt.).

[163] For example, Norris says, "[I]n his close confrontation with the Arian menace in Constantinople, he also occasionally subscribed to double predication, using the humanity as a separate subject in order to protect the impassibility of God" ("Gregory Nazianzen's Doctrine of Jesus Christ," 203).

[164] Cf. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 128–43.

de force of parallel expressions describing activities of Christ "as human" and "as God." In the midst of this, he gives a list of paradoxes where the Greek word *alla*, typically translated as "yet" or "but," expresses the hinge that swings the emphasis from the humanity to the divinity in the one subject of Christ:

> As lamb, he is mute—yet he is Word (ἀλλὰ Λόγος ἐστί), proclaimed by the voice of one crying in the wilderness. He is weakened, wounded—yet he cures every disease and every weakness. He is brought up to the tree and nailed to it—yet by the tree of life he restores us. Yes, he saves even a thief crucified with him; he wraps all the visible world in darkness. He is given vinegar to drink, gall to eat—and who is he? One who turned water into wine, who took away the taste of bitterness, who is all sweetness and desire. He lays down his life; he has power to take it again. . . . If the first set of expressions starts you going astray, the second set takes your error away.[165]

The recognition of a single subject (one "who") in distinguishing Christ as divine and Christ as human can be called a kind of partitive exegesis, as John Behr does.[166] While this attention to what is one, and what is two, holds great importance, it should also be admitted that Gregory gives a much more complex picture. As we will now consider, things are not always distributed in merely one of only two ways.

Gregory ostensibly applies this principle of partitive exegesis over the course of ten disputed passages in *Or*. 30 as mere notes, a basis for others to do the work of fine details.[167] In fact, he gives an extraordinary range of nuance with many adjustments for the particular cases in the ten disputed passages. For example, in his third scriptural case, he deals with the term "greater" from "the Father is greater than I," a verse that also caught his attention in *Or*. 29.15.[168] Gregory's Eunomian opponents understand this to mean that the Father is greater than the Son in divinity and, therefore, the Son is not of the same or equal substance as the Father. Gregory, for his part, does not simply interpret the verse to mean that the Father is greater than the Son considered as human. While true, Gregory considers this to be trivial. Rather, one ought to see how the Father is greater than the Son, while also seeing the Son "equal" to the Father (cf. Phil. 2: 6). The Father is greater by reason of being the "cause" of the Son, while there exists equality in the divine nature. In fact, it is precisely

[165] *Or*. 29.20 (SC 250.222); trans. Williams and Wickham, 88 (alt.); cf. Isa. 53: 4–7; John 1: 1, 23; Matt. 9: 35; 1 Pet. 2: 24; Mark 15: 24; Gen. 2: 9, 3: 32; Rev. 2: 7; Luke 23: 43; Matt. 27: 45, 48; John 2: 7–9; Exod. 15: 23–25; Song 5: 16 (LXX); John 10: 17–18; Matt. 27: 50–52; John 5: 21; 2 Tim. 1: 10; Matt. 27: 60, 28: 6; John 20: 8–9; Eph. 4: 8–9; Mark 16: 19; and 2 Tim. 4: 1.

[166] Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 347–52 and 476.

[167] Cf. *Or*. 30.16.

[168] Cf. *Or*. 30.7 and John 14: 28. For Gregory's interpretation of this verse as it would influence the work of Photios, Michael Psellos, and (possibly) Symeon the New Theologian, see Andrew Louth, "St. Gregory the Theologian and Byzantine Theology," in *Re-reading Gregory of Nazianzus*, ed. Christopher A. Beeley, 252–66, esp. pp. 259–60 and 263–64.

because the Father is the "source," "first principle," and "cause," that the Son (and the Holy Spirit) can be rightly considered as equal to the Father.[169]

The titles of Christ

Gregory's nuanced argument continues after he finishes teaching the select passages of the Nicene controversies and deals directly with the titles of Christ in Scripture. This exemplifies a far-reaching interest in Christ's titles seen repeatedly throughout Gregory's works.[170] But before considering those titles proper to the Son, Gregory begins with a consideration of naming God, for Christ is God.[171] Gregory does this through five considerations. First, he begins with an apophatic axiom: God cannot be named. Gregory learns this from the ancient Hebrews whose respect for God prohibited them from pretending that their speech could possibly express the divine nature. Just as no one can breathe all the air, so no mind can contain, or language express, the divine substance in fullness. Second, Gregory says that there exist special names, such as "He who is" and "God." Gregory finds that the former is more adequate, as it communicates God's name in Exod. 3: 14 and it is an absolute term, whereas "God" is a relational term, like "Lord," as one says God or Lord of something. The absolute term better captures the sense of God's absolute existence, independent of all things. The third and fourth aspects express how God has titles on two levels, that of his power (such as the Almighty or King of glory) and that of his providential ordering (such as God of salvation or God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). Finally, all these are shared among the three whose personal names are Father (the unoriginate),

[169] See esp. Christopher A. Beeley, "Divine Causality and the Monarchy of God the Father in Gregory of Nazianzus," *Harvard Theological Review* 100 (2007): 199–214 and his *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 201–17. Defending Gregory on this point against Leonardo Boff, see Ben Fulford, "'One Commixture of Light': Rethinking Some Modern Uses and Critiques of Gregory of Nazianzus on the Unity and Equality of Divine Persons," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 11 (2009): 172–89.

[170] Gregory exceeds Origen in the variety of titles for Christ, as Gregory (especially in his poetry) looks beyond the Bible to appropriate non-Christian appellations of the gods. For example, Gregory has Apollo announce his own destruction by Christ and calls Christ *autopatōr*, a title found within Apolline oracles of the period, in *Carm.* 2.2.7.253–55. Cf. Alan Cameron, "Gregory of Nazianzus and Apollo," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 20 (1969): 240–41. For analysis of the titles of Christ in *Or.* 2, see Chap. 6. For Gregory's use of Christ's titles within his scriptural exegesis for action and contemplation, see Ben Fulford, "Gregory of Nazianzus and Biblical Interpretation," in *Re-reading Gregory of Nazianzus*, ed. Christopher A. Beeley, 31–48, at pp. 37–40; cf. Fulford, "Divine Names and the Embodied Intellect: Imagination and Sanctification in Gregory of Nazianzus' Account of Theological Language," *Studia Patristica* 50 (2011): 217–31, at pp. 228–30.

[171] Cf. *Or.* 30.17–19. See also *Or.* 29.15.

Son (the begotten), and Holy Spirit (that issuing or proceeding without generation). Gregory then comes to the Son's titles.

After considering the title of Son (because he stems from the Father) and that of the only Begotten (because his generation is unique and is achieved in a fashion unlike bodies), Gregory gives the longest treatment to the title of the Word, providing multiple reasons for this name.[172] He is the Word because he is related to the Father as word is to the mind—both by the Word's passionless birth from the Father, and by the declaratory function in the relationship. The Word is like a definition, while the term defined is the Father. This is why he who has known the Son has known the Father. The Word is the concise revelation of the Father's nature. All of these descriptions of the Word center on the relationship between the Word and the Father; Gregory gives the last description as a connection between the Word and creation. He says to his listeners that they would not be wrong if they explained the name by that the fact that the Word exists inherently in real things, for all things are held together by the Word. This shows a special dependence internal to the very being of things—a dependence through the Word, on the Father. Gregory then touches upon other titles: Wisdom, Power, Truth, the Pure Seal of the Father and his most unerring impress, Image, Light, Life, Righteousness, Sanctification, Purity, Redemption, Sacrifice, and Resurrection. After giving this list, Gregory explains that these titles are common to that which is above us, and also to that which has happened for our sake.

The next group of titles concerns those that are properly ours, and have been assumed by the Son for our sake.[173] When going to these, Gregory first considers the title of "human." Gregory emphasizes the complete solidarity of Christ with humans in all things but sin and, so, as human, Christ is like yeast for the whole lump. Other such titles are Son of Man, Christ (in which his divinity has anointed his humanity), Way, Door, Shepherd, Sheep, Lamb, High Priest, and Melchizedek. Again, it should be emphasized that Gregory is not dividing Christ; rather, he teaches the only-begotten Son, who is the Word of the Father, assumed titles that are properly ours for our sake. There remains only one subject, but one spoken of in different respects because of his identification with us.[174]

[172] Cf. *Or*. 30.20. For a contextualization of this passage in patristic arguments against Arianism on the meaning and function of the Logos, see Egan, "Gregory of Nazianzus and the Logos Doctrine."

[173] Cf. *Or*. 30.21.

[174] For a different view, see Frederick Norris, who writes: "The Theologian's final point is that when the largest group of scriptural texts is assembled which speak of Jesus Christ, his threefold model of predication: the Son before incarnation, the Son incarnate, and Jesus the man, is the interpretative framework which is most appropriate." See Frederick Norris, "Wonder, Worship and Writ: Patristic Christology,"*Ex Auditu* 7 (1991): 59–72, at p. 66.

This differentiation of titles for the one subject is unified at the end of his oration. Gregory concludes with a stirring admonition that links the Son's titles with our progress: we must "run through" them, for divinization.

> There you have the Son's titles. Walk in a divine way through all that are sublime, and with a fellow-feeling through all that involve the body; but better, treat all in a divine way, so that you may ascend from below to become God, because he came down from above for us. Above all, keep hold of this truth and apply it to all the loftier and lowlier names and you will never fail: Jesus Christ yesterday and today—both bodily and the same one spiritually—and forever. Amen.[175]

Like Origen, Gregory presents a theology of the Word's titles that invites our movement.[176] The purpose of his work to distinguish theology, properly speaking, from the economy, or rather, to treat all the titles from a divine point of view, is to enable us to be divinized.[177] Thus, the attention to the multiplicity of Christ's titles is not only for understanding the oneness of Christ, but also for our attainment of union with God.

As we considered at the beginning of this section, discussions of the Word in fourth-century Trinitarian theology and Christology were both differentiated and united by a correct reading of the Scriptures for our salvation. Gregory, in fact, ends several orations with passages that explicitly bring together scriptural references to the mysteries of the Trinity and Christ, usually culminating in praise of Christ.[178] The third *Theological Oration* exemplifies this. After combining 2 Cor. 5: 20 and 1 Thess. 5: 19 in a single reference that calls upon God, Christ, and the Spirit, Gregory concludes his speech by exposing yet again both the quarrelsome attitude of his opponents and his own union with the Trinity in Christ: "Although you may have an exceeding love for a quarrel, yet we have the Trinity in our safekeeping and by the Trinity can be saved, abiding pure and blameless until the more complete revelation of what we long for in Christ himself, our Lord, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."[179] Gregory's theology of the Word, which differentiates what is spoken of, in a Trinitarian key, from what refers, in a Christological key, to the work of salvation, resolves in a single harmony that sings praises to Christ forever in heaven.

[175] *Or.* 30.21 (SC 250.274); trans. Williams and Wickham, 112 (alt.); cf. Gen. 14: 17–20; Heb. 7: 1–2, 5: 2, 13: 8.

[176] Cf. Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* I.11.

[177] Cf. Hilarion Alfeyev, *Le Chantre de la lumière: Introduction à la spiritualité de saint Grégoire de Nazianze*, trans. from the Russian by Alexandre Siniakov (Paris: Cerf, 2006), 268–70.

[178] Cf. *Or.* 1.7; 6.22; 8.23; 9.6; 10.4; 12.6; 13.4; 15.12; 17.13; 20.12; 21.37; 24.19; 25.19; 29.21; 33.17; 37.24; 38.18; 39.20; 41.18; 42.27; 43.82; 44.12; and 45.30. For concluding praises of Christ without reference to the Trinity, cf. *Or.* 2.117; 3.8; 7.24; 11.7; 14.40; 16.20; 22.16; 23.14; 27.9; 32.33; 36.12; and 40.46.

[179] *Or.* 29.21 (SC 250.224); trans. Williams and Wickham, 89 (alt.); cf. Acts 24: 16; Phil. 1: 10; Rev. 1: 6.

CONCLUSION

By laying the groundwork for our view of Gregory's autobiographical Christology on his theology of the Word, we have seen how Gregory himself unites various senses of *logos* for the sake of his *bios*. This chapter concludes by articulating its main points with new illustrations from Gregory's words about the power of the Word in his life.

First, Gregory's words must not be separated from his faith in the Word. Believing that God gave words to all people as a bond in society, Gregory seeks to show how the heritage of Greek literature is at the service of Christ the Word. He shatters an exclusive claim, made by the pagans on the classics, and invites all peoples, created to be like the Word in their use of reason and speech, to share in the Christian life of true worship with words. To this effect, Gregory speaks in *Or.* 4 about the double appropriateness to offer a sacrifice of praise in words to the Word against the Emperor Julian:

> For not merely are thanksgivings in words most suitable unto that Word (*Καὶ γὰρ οὐ τῷ Λόγῳ μόνον ἡ διὰ λόγου χάρις οἰκειοτάτη*), who, of all the names whereby he is called especially delights in this appellation, and in such a sense of the title, but also a fitting judgment is it for that a man to be punished by means of words for his transgressions against words, which, though the common property of all rational beings, he begrudged to the Christians, as though they were his own exclusively; devising as he did a most irrational thing with respect to words (*ἀλογώτατα περὶ λόγων*), although he thought himself to be the most rational of all (*διανοηθεὶς ὁ πάντων, ὡς ᾤετο, λογιώτατος*).[180]

Moreover, the attention to words should be seen in relation to Gregory's training as a rhetor who seeks to persuade others to accept this philosophy of living by the Word. In his oration on Pentecost in the year 380 in Constantinople, Gregory says, "Let us philosophize a little about the feast so that we may celebrate it spiritually. Although a festal gathering may be marked in different ways by different people, for the servant of the Word, an oration is most fitting and, of words, the one that is most appropriate to the moment (*τῷ δὲ θεραπευτῇ τοῦ Λόγου λόγος, καὶ λόγων ὁ τῷ καιρῷ προσφορώτατος*)."[181] Gregory, as a servant worshiping the Word, most fittingly celebrates a feast by offering words to the Word appropriate to the increasing number of festivals that the Church was observing in the fourth century. His preaching is a philosophical and artistic celebration of what the Word does for our lives.

The Word in Scripture is channeled through Gregory's own earthly life and teaching for people to worship rightly. As Gregory preaches about the divine pedagogy in the Old Testament, "[T]he written law was introduced, to draw us together into Christ, and this is the rationale for the sacrifices, according to my

[180] *Or.* 4.4 (SC 309.92); trans. King, 3 (alt.). [181] *Or.* 41.1 (SC 358.312).

rationale (*καὶ οὗτος τῶν θυσιῶν ὁ λόγος, ὡς ὁ ἐμὸς λόγος*)."[182] The ancient Scriptures of Israel prepare people to receive the Word enfleshed, humanity's greatest good, for the newness of life.

The Word, who may be distinguished as the eternal Word of the Father in the Trinity and as enfleshed for our salvation, comes to transform people's lives by incorporating them in the mysteries of his human life. *Or*. 29 and 30 reveal that distinction by interpreting the words of Scripture so that faith may fulfill reasoning. Gregory jibes against his opponent who does not read the Bible rightly:

> Now that we know just how invincible you are in logical twists, let us see what strength you can muster from Holy Scriptures. Perhaps you may undertake to win us over with them. We, after all, understand and preach the Son's Godhead on the basis of their grand and sublime language.[183]

According to the Eunomian, Jesus Christ is not truly God the eternal Word. Without rightly honoring the Word (and the Holy Spirit) as God, the Eunomian cannot, according to Gregory's estimation, be divinized by the mysteries recorded in the Scriptures and celebrated in the liturgies.

But for those who are pure or who are being purified by the Word, Gregory leads their celebrations of the Word's mysteries. He speaks in a liturgical oration of how different persons bring forth gifts to God according to their various abilities. After mentioning how the angels extol the feast, he considers his own contribution: "But we will contribute a discourse, the most beautiful and most honorable thing we have, especially when singing the praises of the Word for a good deed done for reason-endowed nature (*τῆς λογικῆς φύσεως*)."[184] The preacher offers his words at the service of the Word for those created according to that Word, and now renewed by the benefit being celebrated: Christ the Word's resurrection.

In short, Gregory speaks for the Word, knowing, not only that "the Word was with God and the Word was God" (John 1: 1), but also that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1: 14). This chapter, explicating the complexity of Gregory's multifaceted theology of the Word, now prepares us to focus on Gregory's autobiography where he writes about his life with Christ the Word who dwells among us.

[182] *Or*. 45.13 (PG 36.640C); trans. Harrison, 172.
[183] *Or*. 29.16–17 (SC 250.212); trans. Williams and Wickham, 84.
[184] *Or*. 45.2 (PG 36.625A–B); trans. Harrison, 162.

2

Gregory's Christomorphic Autobiography

Among the eight epitaphs that Gregory wrote for himself, the *Epitaph and Summary of His Earthly Life* succinctly illustrates his Christomorphic autobiography. Written like the other epitaphs in elegiac meter, the poem states:

> O Christ the King (*Χριστὲ ἄναξ*), why did you bind me in these nets of flesh?
> Why did you ever put me in this adversarial earthly life?
> I came into being from a godly-formed father, and from a not insignificant
> Mother; from her praying I came into the light.
> She prayed, and offered me, a baby, to God; an appearance at night
> Poured into me an ardent desire for incorruptibility.
> Christ, indeed, did such things; but recently I have been shaken by waves,
> I have endured grubby hands; I have been undone in body,
> I was running together with unfriendly pastors; I found treachery;
> Deprived of children, I have retired in miseries.
> This is Gregory's earthly life! Let the things thereafter concern
> The heavenly life-giving Christ (*Χριστῷ ζωοδότῃ*). Write these things on stone.[1]

Gregory prominently depicts Christ in this poem that sums up his life. He addresses the poem in prayer to Christ as *anax*, a Homeric title for lord, chief, or king applicable to both gods and humans. Gregory seems to be the first writer in extant literature to use the term as a Christological title, and he employs the term quite frequently in his poetry.[2] In this poem, Gregory prays

[1] *Carm.* 2.1.92 (PG 37.1447–48); my translation, with consulting Abrams Rebillard, 486, Winslow, 13–14, and White, 183. Gregory wrote eight epitaphs only for himself (*Carm.* 2.1.92–99), but he composed two other poems on his family's deaths and on his family's tomb that include himself (*Carm.* 2.1.90–91).

[2] Cf. Rolande-Michelle Bénin, "Les Dénominations du Christ-Logos dans le poème II.1.1. de Grégoire de Nazianze," in *Sens et pouvoirs de la nomination dans les cultures hellénique et romaine*, Actes du colloque de Montpellier, 23–24 May 1987, ed. Suzanne Gély (Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 1988), 113–33, at pp. 119–20. Lampe's *Lexicon* cites the *Metaphrases in Ps.* 77: 5, attributed to Apollinarius, as a term denoting God. Synesius of Cyrene, *Hymni* 3.722 and Nonnus of Panopolis *Paraphrasis in Joannis evangelium* 1: 2 follow Gregory in using this term as a Christological title. Perhaps the frequent repetition of *Christos anax* was to help students to memorize Gregory's verse. See Dunkle, "Gregory Nazianzen's Poems on Scripture," 16.

to Christ in a forceful complaint as the creator of his particular life, so filled with troubles. The poet also knows that Christ granted the blessings of his life, but such blessings seem rather distant now to him. With sickness racking his body, he faces the greed and enmity of hostile pastors and the loss of his own faithful flock. Gregory then entrusts what lies ahead to Christ with a term reminiscent of biblical words meaning "to give life," but is, itself, not found in Scripture.[3]

Chapter 2 considers this highly significant, yet frequently overlooked dimension, of what is especially distinctive to Gregory's way of speaking of Christ: Christ's omnipresence in Gregory's writings on his own life. Through the high literary arts and deep personal faith of his Christomorphic autobiography, Gregory repeatedly evokes Christ in a way that blends Christ into the troubles, fears, and joys of his own life. This evocation suggests Gregory's liturgical poetics.

Through the sacred words of his poetics, Gregory makes present the baptismal mysteries of one's life immersed in Christ's life. Gregory's poetic turns of phrase that communicate the liturgical life of a Christian fill his orations. Yet, his many poems—too often neglected in scholarship—make Christ's salvation even more intensely present for himself and his reader. To approach Gregory through his poetics, we can turn to a comparable example from a commentator on a modern Orthodox theologian of the liturgy, Alexander Schmemann. Olga Meerson has noted about Schmemann's poetics: "Our faith is full of contradictions, which it is necessary not to resolve, but to confess, and that is possible only poetically, setting these contradictions face to face in the antimonic unity of astonishment."[4] Such is the reality, not only for the poetry used within the liturgy, but also for the life that flows from contact with Christ's mysteries. Meerson finds Schmemann's sensitivity to the "soteriological function of poetry" to be two-sided, and we can see that both sides shed light on Gregory's Christomorphic autobiography. The first abolishes the opposition between "wordly and churchly poetry" and "permeat [es] the secular with the spiritual," especially through the poet's suffering.[5] Meerson relates that Schmemann's very life teaches this: "poetry is as free and undogmatic as air, and as necessary to life, both of the body and of the spirit, and, like air, it unites body and spirit in breathing, enabling man to communicate with the divine from within his humanity."[6] The second soteriological function of poetry is that, as the name suggests, the poet makes. For the

[3] Lampe's *Lexicon* shows that other Greek Fathers use *zōodotēs* as a Christological title in noun and adjective forms, such as Proclus of Constantinople, *Or*. 10.2.

[4] Olga Meerson, "The Liturgical Heritage of Fr Alexander Schmemann," trans. from the Russian by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 53 (2009): 353–68, at p. 356.

[5] Meerson, "The Liturgical Heritage of Fr Alexander Schmemann," 366–67.

[6] Meerson, "The Liturgical Heritage of Fr Alexander Schmemann," 367.

priest-poet, it is to bring Communion in a transparency of service so as to communicate the liturgical wealth entrusted to the priest.[7] Both aptly describe Gregory's autobiographical poetry. It breaks down through its evangelization of classical meters and poetic themes the dividing wall between the worldly and the churchly. It also makes transparent Christ as the astonishing wealth of the Christian soul in the midst of all life's vicissitudes.

In this awareness of Gregory's liturgical poetics, this chapter begins by considering the autobiographical character of Gregory's writings and stressing its pastoral purpose. It then sketches Gregory's life from birth to death (and beyond) through some of the images, prayers, and scriptural verses of Christological importance that Gregory uses in his autobiographical poetry. Finally, it gives an extended textual treatment of the *De rebus suis*, a pervasively Christomorphic didactic epic that narrates to Christ and an audience the difficulties of Gregory's life. This threefold consideration of Gregory's distinctively autobiographical consciousness, the position of Christ in Gregory's poems on himself, and the *De rebus suis*, demonstrates Gregory's perduring attention to Christ through his autobiographical poetry. Gregory's poetics make the reader experience the form of Christ in Gregory's own life.

THE DISTINCTIVELY AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL QUALITY OF GREGORY'S WRITINGS

Applying a lesson learned from the sea's crashing on rocks, Gregory comments that he is "the kind of person who relates everything to myself."[8] Perhaps more than any other Father of the Church, Gregory draws attention to the way he thinks, the prayers he makes, the sufferings he endures, the illnesses he bears, the enemies he fights, and the causes he champions.[9] With little exaggeration, one could say that all Gregory's writing is in some sense autobiographical—as he almost never gives an account of anything disconnected from his own life.[10]

[7] Cf. Meerson, "The Liturgical Heritage of Fr Alexander Schmemann," 367–68.

[8] *Or.* 26.9 (SC 284.244); trans. Daley, 110.

[9] Musurillo gives this assessment: "With the exception of Augustine, no other Father of the Church reveals so much of his own interior longings, his doubts, and his anxieties. Thus the greatest value of Gregory's poetry is the personal insight into the heart of one of the most brilliant of early Greek theologians." See Herbert Musurillo, S.J., "The Poetry of Gregory of Nazianzus," *Thought* 45 (1970): 45–55, at p. 46.

[10] Raymond Van Dam comments, "Friendship, culture, identity: even though in different guises, Gregory was always writing about himself." See Van Dam, *Kingdom of Snow: Roman Rule and Greek Culture in Cappadocia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 204. For a favorable appreciation of the autobiographical character of Gregory's writings, see Gilbert, "Person and Nature," 1–16. Gilbert calls Gregory "the first Christian autobiographer."

Several scholars, such as John A. McGuckin, have recently overturned a rather facile interpretation of Gregory as a self-absorbed and rather depressing character in order to showcase the strength that he crafts through autobiography.[11] In his "Autobiography as Apologia in St. Gregory of Nazianzus," McGuckin argues that Gregory sought to defend his life and teaching against his opponents. For McGuckin, the driving force for Gregory's autobiographical writings comes from "above all the seething flame of his resentment of Nektarios," the man recognized as bishop of Constantinople after Gregory's bitter departure back to Cappadocia.[12]

A more critical treatment of Gregory's autobiography comes from Raymond Van Dam, who thinks that Gregory's reason for writing about himself was self-serving, and that Gregory lacked skill in crafting autobiography: "Finding a consistent theology had been easy compared with finding a consistent self, and in these poems Gregory seemingly 'stuttered' as he tried out different approaches and searched for a definitive reading of his experiences."[13] Van Dam comes to this conclusion:

> [I]n this search for an orthodox self, Gregory had also constructed an array of apocryphal identities. By composing a series of autobiographical poems he had already created a series of possible selves that were all retrospective falsifications of his life. Later biographers could make up little about Gregory that he had not already made up about himself.[14]

A landmark study of Gregory within the history of early autobiography is Georg Misch, *A History of Autobiography in Antiquity*, vol. 2, trans. E. W. Dickes (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950), 600–24.

[11] Other treatments include: Neil B. McLynn, "A Self-Made Holy Man: The Case of Gregory Nazianzen," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6 (1998): 463–83, and Susanna Elm, "A Programmatic Life: Gregory of Nazianzus' *Orations* 42 and 43 and the Constantinopolitan Elites," *Arethusa* 33 (2000): 411–27. Cf. the same idea expressed in Elm, "Inventing the 'Father of the Church': Gregory of Nazianzus' 'Farewell to the Bishops' (Or. 42) in its Historical Context," in *Vita Religiosa im Mittelalter: Festschrift für Kaspar Elm zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds. Franz J. Felten and Nikolas Jasptert (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1999), 3–20.

[12] John A. McGuckin, "Autobiography as Apologia in St. Gregory Nazianzen," *Studia Patristica* 13 (2001): 160–77, at pp. 176–77. Also, attention should again be drawn to McGuckin's *St. Gregory of Nazianzus*. For purposes of Gregory's autobiography, see especially chap. 1, "In Search of a Self," 1–34 and chap. 7, "The Twilight of a Poet," 371–98. In his first chapter, McGuckin interprets the autobiographical current of "antagonism and resentment" against his father not only within a modern psychological perspective, but also in this context of theological reflection on Christ in the fourth century. McGuckin writes, "Gregory made it his theological life's work to stand against the theological monism which had been his father's ancestral tradition. He defends his mother's Christological tradition. . . . That this series of bold and fundamental conceptions at the heart of Gregory's theology, conceptions that made of his Christological and Trinitarian system the standard orthodoxy of subsequent Christianity, are so intimately related to his notion of a father's relation to his son, is of no small significance" (p. 9).

[13] Raymond Van Dam, *Becoming Christian: The Conversion of Roman Cappadocia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 175.

[14] Van Dam, *Becoming Christian*, 185. For a refutation of Van Dam's position from the perspective of looking at later biographers, especially Gregory the Presbyter, see Stephanos

Although I disagree with Van Dam's judgment, I admit that when Gregory tells his life's story, he does it in a way that points beyond the confines of his actual life. This representational quality in his writing was not something discovered only in modern scholarship, but is found, albeit differently, in Gregory's Byzantine legacy. John of Damascus introduces some quotations from Gregory the Theologian by simply writing "to speak theologically."[15] The author of an early tenth-century encomium proclaims, "I am speaking about Gregory, who was named after the most divine theology or, to be more precise, who is theology itself."[16] Not only Gregory's word, but his life becomes theology.

Gregory's autobiography through Christian and non-Christian models

Looking at the fourth century, we see that the distinctive quality of Gregory's autobiographical character comes out in marked contrast to Basil of Caesarea, the friend Gregory claimed to admire the most.[17] Basil never mentions several family members, such as his father, his brother Naucratius, and his sisters including Macrina (who according to their brother Gregory of Nyssa led Basil to embrace the ascetic life).[18] Basil never discusses key aspects of his past, such as his youth and his time of study in Athens (which features so prominently for our Gregory).[19] He also never acknowledges important confrontations, such as the fracture in his friendship with Gregory over Gregory's consecration as bishop of Sasima in 372. On this, and so much more, Raymond Van Dam comments, "In his presentation of himself Basil was virtually a man with no past, no great changes of mind to explain, no regrets that he had to face

Efthymiadis, "Two Gregories and Three Genres: Autobiography, Autohagiography and Hagiography," in *Gregory of Nazianzus: Images and Reflections*, eds. Jostein Børtnes and Tomas Hägg, 239–56, esp. pp. 255–56.

[15] Cf. Daley, "Saint Gregory of Nazianzus as Pastor and Theologian," 107 n. 4, citing PG 94.1237C; 1328B from John Damascene's first and second orations *On images*.

[16] Cf. Van Dam, *Becoming Christian*, 185, citing Nicetas the Paphlagonian, *Laudatio Gregorii* 1.

[17] In this paragraph I am indebted to chap. 9, "A Blank Sheet of Paper: The Apocryphal Basil," in Van Dam, *Becoming Christian*, 162–70.

[18] Macrina is sometimes considered "the Fourth Cappadocian." For example, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture: The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism*, Gifford Lectures at Aberdeen, 1992–93 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), ix. For Gregory of Nyssa's construction of Macrina's teaching, see his *On the Soul and Resurrection* and *The Life of St. Macrina*.

[19] For a comparison of Gregory's depiction of Athens with that of Libanius, see Aaron Wenzel, "Libanius, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Ideal of Athens in Late Antiquity," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 3 (2010): 264–85.

again, no memories that he wanted to share with others."[20] Such is certainly not the case with Gregory of Nazianzus!

Various philosophical and rhetorical practices led to public introspection in two distinct turns converging in autobiography. This development arose from a turn inward to elaborate, not simply the deeds of one's life, but the thoughts and passions deep within the soul. Autobiography also signals a turn outward to celebrate, confess, mourn, and complain about what lies hidden to an audience.[21] This occurs typically in epideictic oratory and, more intimately, in letters, poetry, and journal records. In this regard, Gregory's autobiographic interest bears resemblances to that of three non-Christian figures significant for understanding Gregory's project: Emperor Marcus Aurelius, Emperor Julian, and the famed rhetor Libanius.

Of great importance to the history of autobiography, the second-century philosopher-emperor Marcus Aurelius has left his remarkable *Meditations*, known to Gregory's contemporary Themistius (although we cannot ascertain if the work was actually studied in the fourth century).[22] Pierre Hadot says the *Meditations* can be best characterized in the genre of personal notes (*hypomnēmata*).[23] These notes are no mere ramblings, but spiritual exercises of Stoic philosophy. Marcus becomes, through the dogmatic formulations of his *Meditations*, the model of the ideal good man.[24] This means that Marcus sought to implement the three rules of life set forth by Epictetus in living out logic, ethics, and physics. By doing so, he can achieve serenity for his *hēgemonikon*, or guiding intellect, in accordance with his inner *daimōn*, a spirit identified as his share in the *logos*, or universal Reason. One exemplary meditation is this:

[20] Van Dam, *Becoming Christian*, 163. Van Dam concludes, "Because he had been so hesitant to talk about his own experiences and feelings, Basil had essentially left his life as a blank sheet of paper" (p. 170).

[21] Autobiographical writers commonly have at least two audiences in mind, as they may be written ostensibly only to oneself, to another (such as a close friend or ardent enemy), or to God/the gods—but may have a much larger specific audience at the time.

[22] See the careful remarks in Pierre Hadot, *The Inner Citadel: The* Meditations *of Marcus Aurelius*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 21–23. Hadot writes: "It was not until the Byzantine tenth century that we find testimonies to the reading and copying of Marcus' works" (p. 22). This differs from Papaioannou's assertion that the *Meditations* "were read and valued in the time of Gregory (as the rhetorician Themistius, Gregory's contemporary, attests)." See Stratis Papaioannou, "Gregory and the Constraint of Sameness," in *Gregory of Nazianzus: Images and Reflections*, eds. Jostein Børtnes and Tomas Hägg, 59–81, at p. 60. Papaioannou credits Hadot, *The Inner Citadel*, 21–22 for this, and gives no reference to Themistius. But see, as Hadot notes, Themistius, *Or.* 6.81c. For a brief study of the epistolary relationship between Themistius and Gregory, see Thomas Brauch, "Gregory of Nazianzus' *Letters* 24 and 38 and Themistius of Constantinople," *Studia Patristica* 47 (2010): 129–34. For the consideration of Themistius as a model for Gregory's philosophy, see Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 225–28.

[23] Hadot, *The Inner Citadel*, 30–34.

[24] Hadot, *The Inner Citadel*, 35–53.

> Live with the gods. To live with the gods is to show them at all times a soul contented with their awards, and wholly fulfilling the will of that inward divinity, that particle of himself, which Zeus has given to every human for ruler and guide—the mind and the reason.[25]

Because Marcus wrote down these *Meditations* in a way that speaks beyond his particular situation, such as defending the Empire's border regions, readers can identify with him, and find that when Marcus speaks to himself, he also speaks to them.

How might this relate to Gregory's poetry? Hadot defends Stoicism as a doctrine of love, but also admits that one could say that Christian love is more personalized: "In the Christian view, the *logos* is incarnate in Jesus, and it is Jesus that the Christian sees in his fellow man. No doubt it was this reference to Jesus which gave Christian love its strength and its expansion."[26] Indeed, this reference to the incarnate Word makes a stark contrast to the *Meditations*. Like the Stoics, Gregory is concerned about conformity to the *logos* and achieving stability for his mind amidst a quite hostile world. But Gregory has a different set of *dogmata* than the Stoics, and he has a different ideal to emulate than the philosopher-emperor's devotion to Epictetus. Gregory has faith in Jesus Christ.[27]

From Marcus Aurelius, we move to another philosopher emperor, one who was contemporary with Gregory. As we saw in the previous chapter's consideration of Gregory's double invective after the apostate's death, Julian made a deep impression upon Gregory. Yet, the imprint on Gregory's soul left by Julian's challenge is seen much deeper than in only those two orations.[28] One possible inspiration for Gregory's autobiographical concern is what we find in Julian's *Oration to the Uneducated Cynics*. Reviewing opinions current in his day, Julian considers whether philosophy is "the art of arts and the science of sciences or an effort to become like God, as far as one may, or whether, as the Pythian oracle said, it means 'Know thyself.'"[29] He then states that it is evident that the three definitions are closely related to one another.

[25] *Meditations* 5.27; trans. Staniforth, 87.

[26] Hadot, *The Inner Citadel*, 231.

[27] For a study comparing Gregory with Marcus Aurelius, see Papaioannou, "Gregory and the Constraint of Sameness." Marcus Aurelius sought the parallelism between "the *rationale* (*logos*) of nature and the rationality (*logos*) of the human self" (63). Something similar occurs in Gregory, but he also challenges "sameness" precisely through his understanding of the Incarnation and divinization. *He who is* becomes human, and Gregory has a quest to become another. In his writing on himself, Gregory does not want simply to be his same self; he desires to be radically changed into God through the way of Christ.

[28] See the several works by Susanna Elm on Julian and Gregory, especially her *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*.

[29] Julian, *Or*. 6.3; trans. Wright in *Julian* vol. 2, 11.

Gregory clearly uses the same phrase of "the art of arts and the science of sciences" in *Or.* 2, his extremely influential text on the priesthood.[30] What should not be missed is that Julian's other two definitions of philosophy also pertain to Gregory's autobiography: to become like God and to know oneself. Gregory is famous for having coined the term *theōsis* and formulated a distinctively Christian understanding of deification considered authoritative for the Byzantine tradition. Yet, many of Gregory's successors failed to see how he united this quest to become divine with a philosophical quest for self-knowledge. It is not merely that "the human being becomes God," but rather (as in Gregory's startling rhetoric) that "I might be made God to the same extent that he was made man."[31] This "I" Gregory fleshes out with all the sufferings, lamentations, worries, hopes, and praises in a public exposure of knowing himself.

Julian's threefold description of philosophy thus offers a valuable look into Gregory's autobiographical project. The reader constantly finds both Gregory's philosophical quest to be divinized, and his sense of a priestly ministry to divinize others, through his sustained attention to the soul. To know oneself, for Gregory, means to know the depths of one's being in relation to Jesus Christ. For example, consider the elegiacs Gregory writes in his "Threnody over the Sufferings of his Soul." In the midst of bemoaning horrible sufferings, Gregory says:

> Whoever has turned his face upward and bound his flesh with the spirit,
> He has Christ as the gentle guide of his life.
> His property, his tongue and ears, and his very *nous*
> And strength, all these he dedicates to the life to come. . . .

[30] Cf. Elm, "Hellenism and Historiography: Gregory of Nazianzus and Julian in Dialogue," 502–4. In *Or.* 2.16 (cf. *Or.* 2.78), Gregory terms the priesthood's pastoral care (not merely the philosophical life as understood by Julian) the art of arts (*technē technōn*). According to Aristotle, the term *technē* covers various arts, including poetry, the art that attempts representation of life (*mimēsis*). Gregory places the *technē* of his poetry, which recounts the twists and turns of his inner life, at the service of his priestly *technē*. See Aristotle, *Poetics* 2 (1447a) in Aristotle, *The Poetics*, "Longinus," *On the Sublime*, Demetrius, *On Style*, in The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960); cf. *Poetics* 14 (1447b).

[31] *Or.* 29.19 (SC 250.218); trans. Williams and Wickham, 86. Vladimir Lossky thinks that after Irenaeus, the Fathers and Orthodox theologians have repeated "God made Himself man, that man might become God" in "every century and with the same emphasis." See Lossky, "Redemption and Deification," *Sobornost* 12 (1947): 47–56, at p. 47. Lossky notes the preface to *Adversus haereses* 5 as the place for this famous deification formula. However, there Irenaeus writes (in the preserved early Latin translation): "Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum: qui propter immensam suam dilectionem factus est quod sumus nos, uti nos perficeret esse quod est ipse" (SC 153.14). McGuckin cites the *Adversus haereses* 5 preface as the basis for stating: "No prizes for knowing the following: 'God made himself man, that man might become God.' But other *sententiae* might not be so well known." See his "The Strategic Adaptation of Deification in the Cappadocians," in *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions*, eds. Michael J. Christensen and Jeffrey A. Wittung (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), 95–114, at p. 96.

> Christ, who donned the form of a slave, tasted
> Death, and again partook of life
> Since he is God, since he is the steward of life, beyond the ages
> Wholly a likeness for all time of the immortal Father,
> In order to release me from the bonds of slavery and of death
> As I start back strengthened toward life.[32]

Gregory's complaints, which at times seem endless, are punctuated by certain motifs common in fourth-century literature and circumscribed by Christian doctrines. Thus, Gregory's mourning over his soul draws him to tell about his family, his ascetic life, his ministry, his orthodox faith, and his longing to praise the Lord forever in heaven.

Another contemporary comparison with Gregory in this regard is Libanius, whose writings provide many autobiographical parallels.[33] When Gregory is compared with Libanius, Gregory does not seem as oddly self-obsessed as he otherwise might. Rhetors entertained and educated through the epideictic oratory of showing what people should praise or blame, a task that showed off not only the subject but also the speaker. Regarded as a premier orator of his century, Libanius also left many hundreds of letters and an autobiography that gives personal information that can be fruitfully juxtaposed to Gregory's writing.

Libanius wrote much of his *Autobiography* (1–155) in 374 and circulated it among friends; the rest (156–285) was added from private diary entries after his death. These latter portions in particular give Libanius the reputation of "a disturbed old man and an 'embittered egocentric' whiner."[34] He tells his story with details and themes that are also emphasized in Gregory's own account: family struggles and an extraordinary devotion to his mother; a teenage love for letters; the offering of himself as a model for philosophy and rhetoric; recurrent treatments of those he admires and rivals; the calling of himself old at a fairly young age; an incident threatening his eyesight; complaints of illnesses; the recounting of a global fame; dedications and supplications to the divine; and the extolling of a certain religious outlook from a minority position. Libanius even speaks, like Gregory, of being stoned—but that thanks to divine help, the stones missed him.[35] Libanius implies that a man frequently

[32] *Carm.* 2.1.45.11–14 and 29–34 (PG 37.1354–56); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 369, 371 (alt.).

[33] Although Georg Misch does not adduce explicit comparisons between Gregory and Libanius, I was led to compare the two from reading his description of Libanius in *A History of Autobiography in Antiquity* 2.554–563. For a pertinent comparative study on religion, see Limberis, "'Religion' as the Cipher for Identity: The Cases of Emperor Julian, Libanius, and Gregory Nazianzus."

[34] Raffaella Cribore borrows from Malcolm Heath's assessment of this general impression in modern accounts of Libanius. See Cribore, *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 13.

[35] As Chap. 5 studies, Gregory alludes numerous times to his being stoned during the Easter Vigil liturgy of 380.

tried to stone him, but gives in detail only one incident when he was alone on a summer day at noon, engrossed in Demosthenes, the illustrious orator of Athens who was threatened so much that he took his own life.[36] Libanius consciously imitated Demosthenes and was considered his successor.[37]

Significantly, both Libanius and Gregory tell their lifestory to a heavenly person. The *Autobiography* of Libanius features Fortune (*tychē*)—which expresses the goddess and how the life of Libanius proceeds. At the beginning of the work, he says that he is neither the happiest of mortals, based upon the applause given to his oratory, nor the most wretched, based upon the perils and pains he suffers, although that is how his life is perceived by others.[38] He says that the gods have mixed the things of fortune for him.[39] At the end of the first half of the *Autobiography*, Fortune herself speaks to console Libanius in the midst of his troubles by reminding him that he has been granted a reputation for excellence in rhetoric.[40]

Gregory's life is likewise thought to hold the greatest blessings, or the worst sufferings.[41] But his story is told frequently in the presence of Christ, not Fortune. At times, Fortune and Christ have similar roles, such as steering the cosmos and the individual life, in the respective works of Libanius and Gregory. But even though Fortune has a presence in life that Libanius can hear, the Antiochene rhetor does not believe in an incarnation of Fortune. For Gregory, Christ is not some lesser deity guiding the course of human life. Rather, Christ is the eternal Word and Son of the Father who became flesh, whose blood has redeemed Gregory, and who continues to dwell in Gregory's heart and accompanies him to the light of heaven's glory.

These distinctively Christian differences from Marcus Aurelius, Julian, and Libanius in autobiography can lead us now to consider the biblical inspiration for Gregory to write in that genre. In this regard, Paul the Apostle has capital importance.

[36] *Autobiography* 235–38. Libanius authored hypotheses on Demosthenes' orations and, like many others, considered him the ideal classical orator.

[37] Cribiore writes, "Libanius's passion for and emulation of Attic oratory elicited comparisons between him and Demosthenes, and he was dubbed 'Demosthenes the second' by Byzantine grammarians. He affected to resent such flattering correlations, and in 380 ironically invited his fellow citizens not to make special efforts in order to honor him: in their enthusiastic acclamations that he was a new Demosthenes, they compared 'things much different' (*Or.* 2.24). Yet he had apparently internalized the analogy when, in 387, he accused his pupils of consigning Demosthenes to oblivion because they were unable to respond when they were asked about the subject of one of his (Libanius's!) speeches (*Or.* 3.18)." See Cribiore, *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch*, 150–51. Concerning *Or.* 2.24, A. F. Norman notes: "By implication Libanius means himself and his own compositions. The audience interrupt his speech, exclaiming that this is the real Demosthenes, and he stops them. Cf. *Or.* 3.18, where both Demosthenes and himself receive a less flattering reception." Libanius, *Selected Works*, vol. 2, *Selected Orations*, trans. A. F. Norman, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 22–23 n. a.

[38] *Autobiography* 1.

[39] *Autobiography* 1.

[40] *Autobiography* 155.

[41] Cf. *De vita sua* 1–5.

Gregory's autobiography through scriptural models

Thanks to the recent work of Michael Stuart Williams, we can see how fourth-century Christian authors of *Lives* frequently found their inspiration in the Bible.[42] Williams gives detailed studies of such works as Eusebius's *Life of Constantine*, Gregory of Nyssa's *Praise of Basil*, and Augustine's *Confessions*, showing that the biblical narrative transforms the contemporary world of the authors, their subjects, and their readers. By applying the scriptural world to their own, the authors allowed their readers to re-imagine their world and envision how the Bible was being lived by their subjects. Williams writes, "Christian biography functioned perhaps above all as a stimulus to conversion: personal conversion, but in the grander cause of converting the world."[43] Gregory of Nazianzus himself could certainly be viewed within this perspective of being authorized by God, the author of Scriptures and the provident Lord of all history, for the conversion of those around him.

One way that Gregory sees himself as living within a world that God's Scriptures define is by considering how he writes of the Apostle Paul. Gregory took supreme delight in the letters of Paul, in which he could read passages highly pertinent for developing a Christomorphic autobiography.[44] Here are but a few examples. In 1 Cor. 15: 1–11, Paul recounts Christ's death, resurrection, and appearance to him; in 2 Cor. 11: 30–12: 10, he boasts of his weakness for the sake of Christ; in Gal. 2: 19–20, he speaks of how Christ lives in him. Perhaps most poignantly, Paul says in Phil. 1: 21, "For to me, life is Christ." Gregory undoubtedly considers Paul to be an example of how to live, as he knows the Apostle was one "who lived in nothing other than in Christ."[45] In *Or*. 2.51–56, Gregory singles out Paul as a model of ministry in Christ by alluding to scriptural details blending Paul's life with that of Christ's. For example, Gregory proclaims: "He imitates Christ, who became a curse for us, who took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses; or, to use more measured terms, he is ready next to Christ, to suffer anything, even as one of the ungodly, for them, if only they be saved."[46] Gregory concludes his Pauline digression to suggest that his description is fitting for more than only Paul: "Such is Paul

[42] Michael Stuart Williams, *Authorised Lives in Early Christian Biography: Between Eusebius and Augustine*, Cambridge Classical Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[43] Williams, *Authorised Lives in Early Christian Biography*, 234.

[44] Cf. Henri Dominique Saffrey, "Aspects autobiographiques dans les Épîtres de l'apôtre Paul," in *L'Invention de L'Autobiographie d'Hésiode à Saint Augustin*, eds. Marie-Françoise Baslez, Philippe Hoffmann, Laurent Pernot (Paris: Presses de l'École Normale Supérieure, 1993), 133–38.

[45] *Or*. 32.15 (SC 318.118); trans. Vinson, 202.

[46] *Or*. 2.55 (SC 247.164); trans. Browne and Swallow, 216–17; cf. 1 Cor. 11: 1; Gal. 3: 13; Matt. 8: 17; Rom. 5: 6 and 9: 3.

and everyone like him in the spirit."[47] What does Gregory discuss next? Himself and his unworthiness.

This lavish attention to Paul was quite common in the late fourth century.[48] Gregory of Nyssa shares our Gregory's Pauline devotion for the imitation of Christ, as attested most eloquently by his *On Perfection*. But the most extravagant praises for Paul in the early Church come from John Chrysostom, author of the sevenfold *On the Praises of St. Paul*, and over 250 homilies on the Pauline corpus (not to mention the extraordinary number of digressions on Paul in other writings).[49] Whereas Chrysostom paints multiple portraits of Paul, Gregory creates multiple vignettes of himself in relation to Christ (as was Paul's focus). To take just one illustration, we turn to the *De vita sua*. Gregory speaks of himself as the Word's disciple whose faithful teaching is defended by the Christ present to him.[50] He then describes being caught between opposing factions in the Antiochene schism:

> Then there arose among my supporters terrible dissension
> As they dragged me to a Paul and to an Apollos,
> Men who had never become incarnate for us
> Nor shed the blood of precious suffering.
> Shall we call ourselves after them rather than after our Savior?[51]

In paraphrasing Paul, Gregory ostensibly distances himself from the Apostle, the Apollos, and those of his day who represent these two biblical figures, in order to cling more closely to his only Savior. In other words, Gregory uses Paul to make himself appear less Pauline and more Christian.

A second type of biblical inspiration comes through Gregory's style of using biblical *paradeigmata*. Gathering up the statistical evidence, Kristoffel Demoen has shown Gregory uses biblical metaphors, especially in his autobiographical poems. Why? Demoen explains that most biblical metaphors "suggest a real actualization of the biblical events. Gregory presents his own history as a repetition, a constituent of salvation history."[52] As we saw in the previous chapter's consideration of the oration on Gorgonia, Gregory

[47] *Or*. 2.56 (SC 247.166).

[48] For the approaches to Paul found in John Chrysostom and Augustine, see Brian E. Daley, S.J., "Saint Paul and the Fourth-Century Fathers: Portraits of Christian Life," *Pro Ecclesia* 18 (2009): 299–317.

[49] Cf. the beautifully detailed work of Margaret Mitchell, *The Heavenly Trumpet: John Chrysostom and the Art of Pauline Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002).

[50] Cf. *De vita sua* 673–78 (Jungck 86; White 62).

[51] *De vita sua* 679–83 (Jungck 86; White 62); trans. White, 63 (alt.); cf. 1 Cor. 1: 12–13. White adds the question mark in the Greek. For another similar example in the autobiographical poetry, see *Carm*. 2.1.13.151–57. Gregory insists elsewhere on being named for Christ. For example, see *Or*. 42.21.

[52] Demoen, *Pagan and Biblical Exempla in Gregory Nazianzen: A Study in Rhetoric and Hermeneutics*, 325.

understands the Christian life as acting out what is written in the Scripture.[53] Preeminently, it is his own life which illustrates for him and his audience the sacred page. His autobiographical writing repeatedly depicts how he knows that the Gospel is at work in the world. For example, in the beauty of epic meter Gregory prays to Christ:

> There are three tax collectors of great fame in your books:
> The great Matthew, the one pouring a libation of tears in the temple,
> And Zacchaeus in addition to them; may I myself be the fourth.
> Moreover, there are three paralytics: one bedridden, one at the fountain,
> And she whom a spirit bound; may I myself be the fourth.
> Finally, three saw in you the light after death, for so you commanded:
> The daughter of the magistrate, the child of the widow, and from the tomb,
> Half-consumed Lazarus; may I myself be the fourth.[54]

Far from giving a general Christian adaptation, Gregory wants to be numbered the immediately next recipient of Christ's healing mercies, as told in the Gospel. The immediacy thus gives Gregory's plea the feeling of a highly personal encounter with Christ himself.

By drawing upon these various models, Gregory produces what could be called a distinctive "logostherapy" through autobiography.[55] As we saw in the previous chapter, Gregory connects the various senses of *logos* for the needs of salvation. His autobiographical poetry evinces a highly cultured literary remedy that places him in contact with the healing Christ. He thus writes of the incarnate Word in the midst of writing on his own life, because he wants his life to be healed and elevated by the Word through words.[56] His logostherapy can then also be used to heal the lives of his listeners.[57]

[53] Cf. John Behr's analysis of *The Letter to Marcellinus* and *The Life of Antony* for understanding Athanasius's doctrine: "Central to both these works is the encounter with the Word and the appropriation of, making one's own, what Christ has wrought. In *The Letter to Marcellinus*, we are invited to meditate on the Psalms in such a way that their perspective becomes our own, effecting a transformation which is portrayed dramatically in *The Life of Antony*. Though usually left aside in accounts of the theological debates of the fourth century, these elements are an intrinsic part of Athanasius' Nicene theology and help account for its persuasive power." See Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 249. Something similar seems to be occurring in Gregory's autobiography.

[54] *Carm.* 2.1.19.91–98 (PG 37.1278–79); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 288–89 (alt.).

[55] Cf. Van Dam's term of "bibliotherapy" for Gregory's purpose in writing the *De rebus suis*. See Van Dam, *Becoming Christian*, 172. This logostherapy should not be confused with the psychological approach of logotherapy by Viktor Frankl. Abrams Rebillard suggests that one could "imagine Gregory's poetic composition as an exercise in the domination of the mind over the pain of the body." See Abrams Rebillard, "Speaking for Salvation," 140 n. 39.

[56] Cf. *Carm.* 2.1.39, *In suos versus*, analyzed in Chap. 1.

[57] For a study of words as a philosopher's *pharmakeia*, see Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 172–76.

CHRIST IN GREGORY'S AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL POETRY

Having considered Gregory's autobiographical turn, our task now is to focus on how Gregory writes of Christ in his own life.[58] Christ holds a particular place of prominence not interchangeable with the Father, the Holy Spirit, or the Trinity. For example, after describing the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Gregory refers to the three as "God, my God, and God, a triple monad."[59] For Gregory, the Son is most especially "my God," the one who took upon Gregory's own mortal existence and makes the Father known to him by the light of the Holy Spirit.[60]

Although Gregory presents the story of his life in a number of ways, nowhere does he give a modern account of his biography (with exact dates, references, and an air of impartial reporting for information organized in a clear chronology).[61] Like his Christological writings, Gregory's autobiographical writings have been culled for what counts as "facts" while the rest has been, for the most part, discarded. The long *De vita sua* and the *Panegyric on Basil the Great* are two texts privileged in collecting the information used in scholarly debate for historical reconstruction. This study, rather than attempting to reconstruct a chronology of Gregory's life, now examines Gregory's poetry classified as *De seipso*, first, for broad themes of Christ's presence and, second, for Gregory's narration of Christ's presence in the events of his life.[62] This section omits references to the poem reckoned first in the autobiographical collection, the *De rebus suis*; a close textual analysis of that poem forms this chapter's final part.

[58] For an overview of Christ in the spirituality of Gregory's poetry, see Franco Rudasso, *La figura di Cristo in S. Gregorio Nazianzeno*. Considering Gregory's poetry, Dunkle accurately observes, "Gregory makes a point of presenting his own life in terms of the life of Christ in the Gospels; like Jesus, Gregory suffers persecution; like Jesus, Gregory sails on a turbulent sea; like Jesus, he goes into the desert; the list of parallels is extensive." See Dunkle, "Gregory Nazianzen's Poems on Scripture," 26–27.

[59] *Carm.* 2.1.14.42 (PG 37.1248); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 260. Cf. John 20: 28.

[60] Cf. Rudasso, *La figura di Cristo in S. Gregorio Nazianzeno*, 171.

[61] Carolinne White comments, "Gregory tends to communicate through a series of vague generalisations, gnomic statements and metaphors, which sometimes make it hard to glean much biographical information from his autobiographical poems." See Gregory of Nazianzus, *Autobiographical Poetry*, trans. and ed. Carolinne White, Cambridge Medieval Classics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), xxviii.

[62] The Benedictines of Saint Maur developed a system still in use for classifying Gregory's poetry. They enumerate the dogmatic poems as 1.1 (in PG 37.397–522), the moral poems as 1.2 (in PG 37.521–968), the poems on himself as 2.1 (in PG 37.969–1452), and the poems that look to others as 2.2 (in PG 37.1451–1600). See also the epigraphs for others (in PG 38.11–82) and epigrams (PG 38.81–136) that Gregory wrote, included in section 2.2. But this system should not obscure the fact that Gregory frequently speaks of himself in poems beyond those formally known as *De seipso*.

Christ's presence in the autobiographical poetry

Many of the autobiographical poems, in part or taken as a whole, are prayers to Christ that arise from Gregory's woes. For an example seen in this book's Introduction, in one poem Gregory repeats a searing lament tempered only by his tender relationship with Jesus: "Were I not yours, my Christ, this life would be a crime!"[63] A subtler example appears in one of his threnodies where he bemoans his soul caught by evil. He does not speak a word about, or to, Christ throughout this poem of 36 lines until the second half of the last line. After asking what escape he could possibly have from wickedness, Gregory prays quite simply: "You, Christ the King, save me."[64]

At times, Gregory's autobiographical poems speak about, and to, Christ so extensively that they give significant lessons on the Son's relationship to the Father, the Incarnation, the salvation won by Christ, and his continual presence to Gregory. For example, in the second poem in the collection *De seipso*, Gregory writes of his oaths in elegiacs. He begins: "I swore on the Logos himself, who is greatest God to me, beginning from beginning, of the immortal Father, image of the Archetype, a nature (φύσις) equal to its begetter, who came from heaven even into the existence of mortals.'[65] Those who are used to the word "nature" describing the divinity may be surprised that Gregory calls the Word a *physis*, but the Greek word (from *phyō*) means that which is brought forth and so, is appropriately used in this context for the Son.[66]

Again, when speaking of the people as Christ's body in a poem of hexameters on bishops, Gregory gives a most remarkable summary of his theological understanding of the Incarnation, salvation, and Christian witness by word and blood, imitating Christ:

> This people to whom God came from his heavenly throne,
> And emptying his glory into mortal insides
> He was mixed (μίχθη) with humans, God and the mortal joined in one,
> And a great price he paid, suffering in this form, and divine blood
> As a pledge for our evils he poured out, as well as many other
> Sacrifices, those after him sowing the seeds of his word for all
> And meeting the sharp hand of sweet death
> In order with word to honor the Divine Word, with blood, his blood.[67]

[63] *Carm.* 2.1.74.4 and 12 (PG 37.1421–22); trans. Daley, 170.
[64] *Carm.* 2.1.51.36 (PG 37.1396); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 412 (alt.).
[65] *Carm.* 2.1.2.1–4 (PG 37.1017); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 229 (alt.).
[66] It could also be a way of saying that the Father and Son are of equal nature, or are naturally one. However, *physis* should not be rendered to mean, as in Abrams Rebillard's translation, "a creation."
[67] *Carm.* 2.1.13.32–39 (PG 37.1230); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 243 (alt.).

Gregory applies all of this particularly to himself and, in the next line, asks from where so much suffering has come to him.

In the tragic verse of his *De vita sua*, Gregory gives a balanced Christological teaching to counter two threats. The first regards those who deny that Christ has a human mind, diminishing the harmony of God's dispensation; the second pertains to those who posit two Sons, one of God and the other of the Virgin, thus wickedly duplicating that harmony. Gregory speaks of the first from lines 609 to 630 with such words as:

> In fact, I believe that the mind particularly needs to be saved by God,
> Since it in particular was corrupted at the first man's creation.
> For that which received the law also transgressed it,
> But what transgressed must also be welcomed back.
> I do not wish the Word to save only half of me
> When the whole of me is affected; God should not be insulted.
> As if he had failed to adopt all of me but only assumed the clay,
> Together with a soul devoid of mind, the soul of an irrational creature
> Which, no one denies, has been saved by your Word.[68]

Similarly, in his answer to those who hold an opposing heresy, that of two Sons, Gregory says that this heresy would lead either to worshiping two gods instead of one, or banishing the composite nature of God, and so God would not suffer the things experienced by the flesh. In Christ, the human nature participates in the whole God. This is quite different from a prophet who participates, not in God, but in divine qualities. Then Gregory writes:

> These men should be gone from the discussion (ἐκ μέσου λόγου)
> If they do not worship the God-Man as one being,
> The one who assumed and that which was assumed,
> The timeless and that which was involved in time,
> That from a Father alone and a mother alone,
> Two natures (δύω φύσεις) in Christ becoming one (ἕνα).[69]

For Gregory, the doctrines of faith are not external to his life, but give shape to how he lives, ministers, and writes. To separate the doctrinal exposition from the account of his life is to miss Gregory's distinctive blending of the life of Christ with his own.

Gregory uses the name Christ 141 times in the autobiographical poetry,[70] and yet Christ appears under numerous additional guises and titles, such as

[68] *De vita sua* 622–30 (Jungck 84; cf. White, 56–58); trans. White, 57–59 (alt.).

[69] *De vita sua* 646–51 (Jungck, 84; White, 58–60); trans. White, 59–61 (alt.). Note that ἕνα is the masculine accusative singular. It seems that the meter could permit the feminine accusative singular, μίαν, which would imply "one nature." But Gregory never writes of Christ as "one nature." More will be said about the oneness of Christ in Chapter 3.

[70] Cf. Rudasso's chart of the appearances of "Christ" in Gregory's poetry found in *La figura di Cristo in S. Gregorio Nazianzeno*, 80. That title also appears 57 times in the dogmatic poems, 115 times in the moral poems, and 54 times in poems that look to others.

Son of the Father, Creator, Sole Blessing of Gregory's life, Healer, Companion. We find Gregory's creativity in not only treasuring key images from the Old and New Testaments, but also imagining new titles for Christ that fit Gregory's meter. Gregory also imagines words given from Christ to him. For example, in an exhortation to himself, written in seven verses of iambic trimeter, Gregory tells himself to obey the Logos who became incarnate for his sake. He then hears the Logos say to him:

> Let us go there; for I came here
> To place you higher, you who fell in sin.
> God calls. Let us hasten in winged flight.[71]

Christ through the stages of Gregory's life

Gregory frequently sets his life within the terms of his family. He speaks of his father as someone who had wandered away, but later became Christ's friend and then a shepherd.[72] Gregory's mother, on the other hand, came from a devout family and never wandered. Gregory calls her the "mouth of the truth" (*tēs alētheias stoma*).[73] He believes that Christ gave him as a gift to his mother in answer to her prayers for a son.[74] He speaks of how the great Christ honored him even in the womb of his pure mother.[75] Gregory also speaks of how his mother dedicated him as a lamb, or a noble sacrifice endowed with *logos*, to Christ.[76] By these few examples we see some of the complexity interwoven in Gregory's Christomorphic autobiography. Gregory becomes a figure of Christ, who was also honored in the womb of a pure mother, and was taken to be a lamb of sacrifice. He also becomes a gift from and to Christ, given by Christ to Gregory's mother and offered back to Christ.

One episode during Gregory's years of studies, to which he often returns in his autobiography, comes in his sea travel from Alexandria to Athens.[77] Along the coast of Cyprus, a bad storm caused all those sailing, including those who did not know God before, to call upon Christ with one accord. Gregory breaks his address to the reader in the *De vita sua* to pray to Christ over the course of 27 lines. He begins: "Even then you were, my Christ, a great Savior, just as now you save me from the swells of life."[78] A few verses later Gregory calls Christ

[71] *Carm.* 2.1.86.5–7 (PG 37.1433); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 448 (alt.).
[72] Cf. *De vita sua* 55–56 (Jungck, 56; White, 14).
[73] *De vita sua* 64 (Jungck, 56; White, 14).
[74] Cf. *Carm.* 2.1.95.3.
[75] Cf. *Carm.* 2.1.50.27.
[76] Cf. *De vita sua* 90.
[77] Cf. Bernd Lorenz, "Zur Seefahrt des Lebens in den Gedichten des Gregor von Nazianz," *Vigiliae Christianae* 33 (1979): 234–41.
[78] *De vita sua* 175–76 (Jungck, 62; White, 22); trans. White, 23 (alt.).

under many titles: "my life, my breath, my light, my strength, my salvation."[79] He recalls Christ's miracles worked in the Old Testament, his mother's own consecration of him, and concludes his prayers with an allusion to Mark 4: 37–41: "Now again one of your disciples is in a storm: for my sake shake off your sleep and walk; let fear be stilled."[80] Gregory has no doubt that the immediate calming of the storm resulted from his prayer to the great Christ.

Gregory's reflections on asceticism also inform us of how he views Christ in his life. Most famously, Gregory recounts a vision of two women, Purity and Temperance, who stand in the presence of Christ the Lord.[81] They invite him to meld his mind with theirs (in the life of asceticism), and so offer to take him up to the heights. Gregory knows that this ascetic journey is one where Christ leads him.[82] Less expressively, at the end of a poem of elegiacs to the priests of Constantinople and to the city, he writes: "This is the word of Gregory, whom the land of the Cappadocians nurtured, and who stripped himself of all for Christ."[83] Other poems graphically depict what Gregory means by stripping himself of everything for Christ. For example, a poem, "Against the flesh," is addressed primarily to the flesh and to Christ. In order to subjugate the flesh to the soul, which is Christ's image, Gregory bids the gut to reject satiety, his knees to stay on the ground, his food to be dust, and his clothing to be a shaggy sack. He writes:

> Such is my remedy for foolishness. Heavenly life from you, Christ,
> Is pure, but earthly life comes from corpses.[84]

By his asceticism, Gregory seeks the true life found only in Jesus.

Gregory speaks frequently of his longing for the flock he left behind in Constantinople. Gregory called his house chapel in the capital "Anastasia" from the word for resurrection (*anastasis*).[85] In one of his poems, he said that the Anastasia raised up the ancient faith, dead in old words, with new words.[86] He calls those who attended that church the offspring of his words (*logōn*

[79] *De vita sua* 183 (Jungck 62; White, 22); trans. White, 23.

[80] *De vita sua* 200–1 (Jungck 62–64; White, 24); trans. White, 25. For Gregory's dactylic hexameter poem on the storm calmed by Christ, see *Carm.* 1.1.28. For the question of that poem's authenticity, see Dunkle, "Gregory Nazianzen's Poems on Scripture," 105.

[81] Cf. *Carm.* 2.1.45.229–69. Cf. Carmen-Marie Szymusiak-Affholder, "Psychologie et histoire dans le rêve initial de Grégoire le théologien," *Philologus* 115 (1971): 302–10. She thinks that the dream has the mark of authenticity and gives a Jungian analysis.

[82] Cf. *Carm.* 2.1.45.279–80, 295. Gregory tells this dream in other ways; for example, he alludes to this nocturnal vision with its *erōs* for wisdom as a gift from Christ in *Carm.* 2.1.95.3–4.

[83] *Carm.* 2.1.10.35–36 (PG 37.1029); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 240.

[84] *Carm.* 2.1.46.37–38 (PG 37.1380); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 396 (alt.).

[85] Cf. Rochelle Snee, "Gregory Nazianzen's Anastasia Church: Arianism, the Goths, and Hagiography," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 52 (1998): 157–86, esp. pp. 158–64.

[86] *Carm.* 2.1.5.3–5.

gennēma), his children.[87] In his poem that gives a dream of the church of the Anastasia, Gregory says that if he should ever forget those faithful, he asks for what must have been for him the worst punishment imaginable—that Christ forget him.[88] In yet another poem, Gregory laments how he is no longer with his people in Constantinople where he preached, sang hymns through the night, and ministered to the poor and sick. He then speaks of the liturgy in Christological and sacrificial terms:

> No longer do I raise my hands in pure sacrificial rites,
> Mingling (μιγνύμενος) in the great sufferings of Christ.[89]

Connected to his writing on his own priesthood is Gregory's understanding of the animosities of other clergymen to him. We know that Gregory had many problems with other bishops, most notably during the Council of Constantinople (381). There, Gregory was concerned about professing the purity of the faith and keeping peace in the Church, but he suffered from the abuse of those who did not think that he should be bishop of Constantinople. Elected bishop of Sasima (although he never took possession of the see), Gregory had been helping his father, the elder bishop of Nazianzus. After a few years of retreat in Seleucia following his father's death, Gregory came to Constantinople to minister to the orthodox community, and was recognized by Emperor Theodosius as the rightful bishop. Various factions considered this to be wrong, as canon 15 of the Council of Nicaea (325) had forbidden clerics to transfer to another diocese. In dramatic fashion, Gregory wrote *Or.* 42 as a certificate of discharge.[90] He retired to Cappadocia where he wrote about his concerns in a sometimes overlooked active engagement with the problems facing the Church.[91] He especially focused on the wickedness, buffoonery, and incompetence of his fellow bishops in his autobiographical poetry.[92] For example, he

[87] *Carm.* 2.1.5.2. For Gregory's development of his parental identity, see Susanna Elm, "Family Men: Masculinity and Philosophy in Late Antiquity," in *Transformations of Late Antiquity: Essays for Peter Brown*, eds. Philip Rousseau and Manolis Papaoutsakis (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 279–302.

[88] *Carm.* 2.1.16.78; cf. Ps. 137: 5–6 and Rom. 9: 3.

[89] *Carm.* 2.1.50.49–50 (PG 37.1389); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 405.

[90] For a study of this oration as a certificate of discharge, see Susanna Elm, "Inventing the 'Father of the Church': Gregory of Nazianzus' 'Farewell to the Bishops' (*Or.* 42) in its Historical Context."

[91] See Neil B. McLynn, "The Voice of Conscience: Gregory Nazianzen in Retirement," in *Vescovi e pastori in epoca Teodosiana: in occasione del XVI centenario della consecrazione episcopale di S. Agostin, 396–1996*, Part 2: *Padri greci e latini*. Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 58 (Rome: Augustinianum, 1997), 299–308.

[92] See Kristoffel Demoen, "Acteurs de pantomimes, trafiquants du Christ, flatteurs de femmes . . . les évêques dans les poems autobiographiques de Grégoire de Nazianze," *Vescovi e pastori in epoca Teodosiana: in occasione del XVI centenario della consecrazione episcopale di S. Agostin, 396–1996*, Part 2: *Padri greci e latini*. Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 58 (Rome: Augustinianum, 1997), 287–97.

begins his long poem *Concerning Himself and the Bishops* with an allusion to Christ as the Suffering Servant. Gregory professes that he has modeled himself on the commandments of the one who suffered; like Christ, Gregory should restrain his tongue. However, Gregory decides that he does not want the wicked altogether triumphant before meeting their fate in fire, and so he writes to excoriate the evils that he has seen among the high clergymen.[93]

The laments against bishops sometimes blend with other lamentations, such as his frequent complaints of suffering from illness.[94] He sees his physical sufferings as a way for him to be purified from sin on this earth and united to the sufferings of Christ. He also asks for Christ's healing. For example, in a poem of 118 lines, written in elegiacs, "Against the Evil One in sickness,"[95] he begins by addressing the devil as "weaver of wiles," a title with Homeric roots that Sappho uses of Aphrodite.[96] For Gregory, this weaver of wiles feeds on the inmost depths of his heart, and desires to force the divine image down to its knees by frequent and mighty shakings of life.[97] In answer to the Evil One, Gregory calls upon the gentle Christ who already defeated the slayer of men (*androphonos*) in the life of Job, when Christ doubled what Satan had shattered:

> Such is the law of gentle Christ. But command that I
> Be unharmed at long last; your word is my cure.
> A new Lazarus among the dead am I; but shout,
> 'Rise!' and let the corpse live through your words.
> A new paralytic am I, bedridden; but shout,
> 'You are of solid limb!' and I will go, bearing my bed lifted high.
> From your tasseled hem I steal a cure with my hands, but check
> The flow of blood swiftly from my wasted flesh.[98]

Later in this same poem, Gregory prays to Christ as his servant, recalling how people call Gregory their helper in the midst of their diseases.[99] From this

[93] E.g. *Carm.* 2.1.12.1–10.

[94] For Gregory's knowledge of illnesses, see Mary Emily Keenan, "St. Gregory of Nazianzus and Early Byzantine Medicine," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 9 (1941): 8–30. For an argument that Gregory may have contracted leprosy, see Čelica Milovanović, "'Here I am a Breathing Corpse': Did Gregory of Nazianzus Suffer from Leprosy?" *Analecta Bollandiana* 127 (2009): 273–97.

[95] Abrams Rebillard translates the title "*Kata tou ponērou eis tēn noson*," as "Against the Burden of Sickness."

[96] Sappho, *Fragmenta* 1.2, in *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta*, ed. E. Lobel and D. L. Page (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968); cf. Jane McIntosh Snyder, "Weaving Imagery in Homer and the Lyric Poets," *The Classical Journal* 76 (1981): 193–96, at p. 195. Abrams Rebillard also provides some of the classical uses of the term "weaver of wiles," which she identifies as "a deceptive speaker." See Abrams Rebillard, "Speaking for Salvation," 43.

[97] For a study of how Gregory writes of demons in his poetry, see Dayna S. Kallerres, "Demons and Divine Illumination: A Consideration of Eight Prayers by Gregory of Nazianzus," *Vigiliae Christianae* 61 (2007): 157–88.

[98] *Carm.* 2.1.50.67–74 (PG 37.1390); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 406 (alt.).

[99] Cf. *Carm.* 2.1.50.103–5.

recollection, Gregory prays that Christ be gentle in his own life. He concludes the poem in a statement of trust, asking to be taken wherever Christ wishes.[100]

Gregory's reflections on his sickness turn him to Christ's call to consider heaven's life. In a poem on his illness, Gregory recalls how he has learned not to trust in doctors and to put nothing ahead of Christ. Gregory says that he is being destroyed, and looks to Christ who ushers in the finality of this life:

> For you are my God. You disperse the gloom of evils
> For me, a corpse barely breathing, you disperse lamentable existence.[101]

Gregory ends the poem by writing quite simply:

> Christ calls me. Having been tossed here and there,
> Receive me Savior; but purification is needed.[102]

Indeed, Gregory evinces a deep longing for life after death in his autobiographical poetry. This is most likely connected to his concern for this life as a preparation for heaven and his experiences of sorrows, such as from deaths in his family. First his younger brother Caesarius died in 368; his older sister Gorgonia died a year or two after that. Not many years after Gorgonia's passing, his aged parents died, first, his father in 374 and then his mother some months later. For the first three family members, Gregory composed funeral orations. Among his many epigraphs for family and friends, he composed thirty-seven for his mother alone.[103] Gregory's success in revealing his family's holiness, in both life and death, guaranteed that all would become venerated as saints. Similarly, Gregory makes death a significant theme in writing about his own life's relation to Christ. By his Christian faith, Gregory does not think that his life will end after death. His autobiography would thus be incomplete without attending to his own death and what lies beyond. In writing on his death, Gregory frequently returns to the identity formed at the beginning of his life by his family and his faith. In reference to himself and his father, Gregory writes:

> Receive me, Christ, into your chorus and grant attendant glory
> To the son of Gregory, to your servant Gregory.[104]

Gregory also writes concerning his desire for God, by beginning a poem with questions to his mother. He asks her why she bore him and gave him this thorny life. He repeats the question with reference to the inadequacy he feels in responding to his call to be a theologian:

[100] Cf. *Carm*. 2.1.50.118.
[101] *Carm* 2.1.89.30–31 (PG 37.1444); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 466.
[102] *Carm*. 2.1.89.42–43 (PG 37.1445); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 466.
[103] *Carm*. 2.2.66–102.
[104] *Carm*. 2.1.94.5–6 (PG 37.1449); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 470.

> My mother, why did you bear me, since I am able neither to know God
> Nor to explain him to the extent I desire.[105]

Soon after mentioning his regret to the Trinity, he turns to Christ:

> But save me, save me, Word of God, and having torn me
> From the bitter mire, lead me to the other life,
> Where my pure mind dances around you in all your radiance
> My mind no longer hidden below a shadowing cloud.[106]

He thinks that not only is Christ his life's companion, but that he will also see Christ in heaven. Before that hope, everything else in life shrinks away. As Mossay comments in his study of death and the afterlife, Gregory frequently presents death as a prelude to union with Christ.[107] For example, Gregory writes with confidence:

> For me, however, Christ is great wealth, whom some time I shall see
> Purely with my naked *nous*; let the cosmos have the other things.[108]

It is only within this confidence in Christ as his final treasure that Gregory wants us to read his bitter laments about his life on earth. He also seems to imagine us reading his words to him as already in heaven:

> You were living on the earth but a little while, and everything
> You gave willingly to Christ, and with it even winged words.
> But now heaven has you, a great priest,
> Within the heavenly chorus, glorious Gregory.[109]

Typically filling his verses with life's sorrows, Gregory could write that the laments would turn to the songs of heaven because he had lived faithful to Christ. This relationship with Christ, his favorite theme in poetry, is succinctly expressed in the closing lines of a poem in hexameters:

> Lord Christ, to me you are fatherland, strength, blessing, everything.
> Through you may I be revived, as I mingle existence and grief.[110]

[105] *Carm*. 2.1.87.13–14 (PG 37.1434); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 449 (alt.).

[106] *Carm*. 2.1.87.21–24 (PG 37.1434–35); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 450 (alt.).

[107] Justin Mossay, *La Mort et l'au-delà dans saint Grégoire de Nazianze*, Université de Louvain Recueil de Travaux d'Histoire et de Philologie 34 (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1966). In a section on the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh, Mossay writes that there are numerous texts from Gregory presenting death as a prelude to either union with Jesus Christ or resurrection of the flesh (p. 170). Mossay gives sustained attention to the latter, but the two ideas are certainly interconnected (cf. pp. 172–73).

[108] *Carm*. 2.1.82.5–6 (PG 37.1428); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 443.

[109] *Carm*. 2.1.97 (PG 37.1450); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 471. This "Gregory" seems to be the author himself and not his father, as it would be unlikely for our Gregory to have spoken of his long-lived father in the same way.

[110] *Carm*. 2.1.43 (PG 37.1349); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 365.

A DIDACTIC EPIC OF CHRISTOMORPHIC AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Carm. 2.1.1, known as the *De rebus suis*, is a poem of 634 lines frequently dated to an original composition around 371 and edited later by Gregory.[111] Gregory employs this literary sophistication to put measure in his unruly mind, and that of his reader, for Christian content and in epic style.[112] For example, its opening invocation of *Christe anax*, as in the epitaph seen at the beginning of this chapter, immediately stamps the hexameters with a combination of Christian faith and a Homeric title, which Gregory uses to name Christ 13 times in this text alone.[113] Gregory is inviting his readers to be lifted up with him through classical literary form by the Word himself.

The text of the De rebus suis: genre and purpose

McGuckin argues that in the text, "a large section is patched in that had seen earlier use as a discrete legal appeal to the Master of Offices in Constantinople, Sophronios, in 369 or 370."[114] The context is the dispute over his brother Caesarius' estate, and Gregory needed to make an appeal to be able to secure financial privileges in holding the property on behalf of the poor. McGuckin speculates, "In this surviving patch (lines 102–306 of the *De rebus*) the oratorical appeal is self-contained and focused on a plea to have tax exempt status on the basis of his Christian priestly and monastic status."[115] But the *De rebus suis* does not include over 200 lines from the brief *Ep*. 29, although such

[111] Gallay, *La Vie de Saint Grégoire de Nazianze*, 253, "Towards 370"; Denis Meehan, O.S.B., *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus: Three Poems; Concerning His Own Affairs, Concerning Himself and the Bishops, Concerning His Own Life*. Fathers of the Church, vol. 75. (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1987), 20; *Three Poems*, 20, "probably about 371;" Jean Bernardi, *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze*, 319, "about 371;" McLynn, "Self-Made Holy Man," 470 writes that the text was written about ten years after *Or*. 2, the apology following the 362 ordination to the priesthood. This consensus of 371 follows the editorial note in PG 37.970. Demoen argues for a composition in or after 372, the year of Gregory's conflict with Basil over Sasima. See Demoen, "Some Remarks on the Life and Poems of Gregory Nazianzen," 175–77.

[112] Cf. Gregory's expressed purpose of writing poetry for its measure in *Carm*. 2.1.39, *In suos versus*, analyzed in Chap. 1.

[113] Bénin, "Les Dénominations du Christ-Logos dans le poème II.1.1. de Grégoire de Nazianze," 119.

[114] McGuckin, "Autobiography as Apologia," 162. Similarly, Jean Bernardi focuses on Gregory's treatment of Caesarius's property in his brief discussion of the poem. See Bernardi, "Trois autobiographies de saint Grégoire de Nazianze," in *L'Invention de l'Autobiographie d'Hésiode à Saint Augustin*, eds. Marie-Françoise Baslez, Philippe Hoffmann, and Laurent Pernot, 155–65, at pp. 156–58.

[115] McGuckin, "Autobiography as Apologia," 162.

a technique is not uncommon to Gregory and others of his time.[116] Most obviously, the *De rebus suis* is poetry, while the brief letter is prose. Granted that the history gained from a close reading is valuable for understanding Gregory's concerns after his brother's death, *De rebus suis* does not give a chronological narrative, and its scarcity of facts suggests something more than an apology for Gregory's life placed within a meditation on divine providence.[117] To understand the poem better, one must first place it within its proper genre.

No one successfully identified the genre of the *De rebus suis* until Čelica Milovanović.[118] The didactic epic, exemplified by Hesiod's *Works and Days*, Empedocles's *On Nature*, Parmenides's *The Way of Truth*, Lucretius's *On the Nature of the Universe*, and Vergil's *Georgics*, has a number of distinguishing features: an explicit desire to instruct (that of a teacher speaking to a student); a pronounced interest in moral teaching; the use of the epic hexameter with poetic simultaneity (that the poem is created in the performance) and with textual variety and dramatic tonal oscillations; calculated intrusions of vivid narratives or descriptive episodes loosely connected to the main theme; conceptual simplicity of moderate length (between 500 and 1,000 lines); and a metaphrastic nature (a secondary, poetic attempt to paraphrase a prose work on a technical subject).[119] Milovanović demonstrates that the *De rebus suis* fits this description perfectly, and thereby clears some confusion about what Gregory is accomplishing. For example, rather than being a jumbled mess, the three calculated intrusions (lines 367–92, 393–423, and 424–66) in some ways imitate Hesiod's *Works and Days*. Whereas Van Dam judges the *De rebus suis* as a "not very successful" first attempt at autobiography,[120] Milovanović finds that Gregory is "quite successful" in taking the model of Hesiod for his own Christian purpose which offers himself as an example for his readers. For her, Gregory seamlessly interweaves pagan tradition and Christian originality in a poem of theological depth and beauty.[121]

[116] For example, Gregory—or an amanuensis—patched passages from *Or.* 38 into *Or.* 45. As for a note on the correspondence of the situation between *Ep.* 29 and the *De rebus suis*, see Gallay, *Lettres* 1.35 n. 2.

[117] Cf. Jean Bernardi, *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze*, 319–21. According to McGuckin in "Autobiography as Apologia in St. Gregory of Nazianzus," Gregory includes his vision account in *De rebus suis* 195–204 and 292–93, as well as the incident of the storm at sea in *De rebus suis* 1–36 and 307–21 "to demonstrate Gregory's lifelong Christian dedication as opposed to his two rivals for the throne, Maximos and Nektarios, who had disreputable pasts" (163).

[118] Čelica Milovanović, "Gregory of Nazianzus's *De rebus suis* and the Tradition of Epic Didactic Poetry," *Zbornik radova Vizantoloskog instituta* 45 (2008): 43–69.

[119] For these commonalities, Milovanović credits Peter Toohey, *Epic Lessons: An Introduction to Ancient Didactic Poetry* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

[120] Van Dam, *Becoming Christian*, 171.

[121] Cf. Milovanović, "Gregory of Nazianzus's *De rebus suis*," 56. The position of Milovanović, with which I concur, also contrasts with that of Meehan who writes, "Except for the *Theological*

Gregory incorporates technical Christian ideas within the requirements of the meter and rhetorical features of epic poetry. Consider these examples that Milovanović adduces. For "of the same essence as the Father" (*homoousion tōi patri*), Gregory writes, *physis gennētoros isē* in line 628—a phrase we saw above in considering *Carm*. 2.1.2.3 which may more literally mean "a nature equal to its begetter." For "become human" (*enanthrōpēsanta*), he says, *epei brotos autos etychthēs* in line 14; and for the Spirit "who proceeds from the Father" *(ek tou patros ekporeuomenon*), he gives *pneuma ho patrothen eisi* in line 630.[122] The most hallowed terms can be rendered in poetic and creative form to express the same truth.

Further theological exploration can complement the findings of Milovanović to show what Gregory is actually teaching in this didactic epic. Although mistaking the proper classical genre of the *De rebus suis*, Francis Gautier offers a still-valuable perspective. Relying upon a dissertation by R. M. Huertas Bénin, Gautier writes that Gregory addressed this poem to God as a lamentation, modeled on the lamentations of the Psalms.[123] This adaption of psalmody in classical Greek style was not unique to Gregory in the fourth century. The father and son by the name of Apollinarius of Laodicea were reputed to have rendered the Psalter in Homeric style. Gregory's text should be seen precisely within this literary effort following Julian's law against Christian teaching of the Greek literary patrimony. Moreover, its Hellenism does not detract from its thoroughly Christian inspiration with a Psalm-like quality that can similarly be found in Augustine's *Confessions* some years later. However, *pace* Gautier, McLynn, and Bernardi, it is inadequate to state that Gregory addresses the poem to God.[124] More specifically, Gregory prays to Christ, God who became human in order that Gregory and his readers could have their minds elevated and become divine.[125]

Orations, which became so celebrated, Gregory is actually much less theological in content than his great contemporary Basil" (16). This is a questionable assertion!

[122] Cf. Milovanović, "Gregory of Nazianzus's *De rebus suis*," 55.

[123] See Gautier, *Le Retraite et le sacerdoce chez Grégoire de Nazianze*, 227; cf. R. M. Huertas Bénin, "Une autobiographie romantique au IV siècle: le poème II, I, 1, de Grégoire de Nazianze," diss. Montpellier, 1988. Gautier records that Bénin counts 41 such Psalm references (p. 227 n. 1).

[124] For Gautier, see preceding note. McLynn writes, "He [Gregory] begins with a plea that God come to his help" ("Self-Made Holy Man," 470). Similarly, Bernardi writes that Gregory's prayer is addressed to God (*Saint Grégoire de Nazianze*, 319). McLynn and Bernardi do not specifically mention Christ in their treatments of the *De rebus suis*.

[125] R. Keydell calls the poem formally a hymn to Christ, as seen in the poem's beginning and end, into which Gregory then inserts his autobiography. See Keydell, "Die Literarhistorische Stellung der Gedichte Gregors von Nazianz," in Atti dello VIII Congresso Internazionale di Studi Byzantini I (Rome: Associazione nazionale per gli studi bizantani, 1953), 134–43, at p. 141. Cf. R.-M. Bénin, "Les Dénominations du Christ-Logos dans le poème II.1.1. de Grégoire de Nazianze." Bénin studies how Gregory uses 27 different Christological titles, borrowed from classical literature and Scripture.

Before analyzing select passages that show Gregory's concern to receive Christ's assistance in his mind, we can consider the evidence that Gregory writes the didactic epic of the *De rebus suis* as a logostherapy for himself and for others in their distress.[126] To do this, one should consider what Milovanović identifies as the main theme of the poem. After his opening prayer, Gregory writes: "Among mortals two gates towards hateful death are open."[127] Milovanović notes that this alludes to the two gates of dreams in the *Odyssey* 19.562–67, and that Parmenides and Lucretius also employ similar imagery.[128] At first glance, such identification may not seem relevant to the text's pervasively Christocentric message.Yet, there is a possible connection of the two gates in the *De rebus suis* with Christ through the *Iliad* 8.15.[129] In that Homeric work, the gates of death are mentioned within the context of the famous "Golden Chain" speech by Zeus (*Iliad* 8.1–26). Zeus boasts among the gods and goddesses that all of them could not pull Zeus down from heaven, but that he could pull all of them—even all the earth and sea with them—up to himself.

How does this relate to Christ? For Gregory, Christ is the God who has done what Zeus mentions of himself—come down from heaven. Moreover, he is pulling Gregory and all others like Gregory up to heaven. Only 14 lines after referring to the two gates, Gregory's poem quotes *Iliad* 8.57, which describes the Trojans as under pressure by necessity when Zeus comes down from heaven in golden array. Moreover, Gregory explicitly mentions the "Golden Chain" later in the poem. In lines 117–18 it describes the faith pleasing to God that Gregory's mother inherited from her ancestors and bestowed upon her children. Not accidentally, it is in lines 120–22 that Gregory says that she touched this world only to the degree that enabled her to lift this life to heaven. Searching through all of his works, we find that Gregory, in two other texts, mentions the "Golden Chain."[130] In the *De rebus suis*, Gregory subtly alludes to the Homeric passage and provides echoes of the two gates of Matt. 7: 13–14 as well as other traditions of the two ways in biblical (such as Psalm 1) and early Christian uses (such as the *Didache* and *Barnabas*).[131] If it is objected

[126] McLynn comments that in this text, as elsewhere, Gregory "presents himself as exemplar and object lesson." See McLynn, "Self-Made Holy Man," 470.

[127] *De rebus suis* 37 (Tuilier and Bady, 5); trans. Meehan, 26.

[128] For the fragment from Parmenides, see line 288.11 in Toohey, *Epic Lessons*, 37, itself taken from *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, eds. G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, M. Schofield, 2d edn. repr. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); and for Lucretius, see his Book 6.32. One could also consider Vergil's *Aeneid* 6.893–901.

[129] Meehan makes this reference without comment in Meehan, *Three Poems*, 26 n. 5.

[130] Cf. Bernardi, *Poèmes Personnels II, 1, 1–11*, 10 n. 36. Bernardi provides the two citations, *Or*. 21.6 and *Or*. 31.28, and comments that the "Golden Chain" designates a very strong bond between noble realities. He does not connect the "Golden Chain" with the "two gates" image from line 37, but he mentions several other classical and biblical allusions in p. 5 n. 16.

[131] Matt. 7: 13 is mentioned in Milovanović, "Gregory of Nazianzus's *De rebus suis*," 55.

that Gregory would not want to characterize Christ in pagan terms, it should be known that he commonly does so in poetry.[132] That is a part of his literary mission. In his skill of combining both classical and biblical allusions, Gregory teaches how to follow not the wrong way, but the way shown by Christ himself in his descent. Gregory believes that Christ, who came down to mix with humanity, can raise the soul through a Christian adaptation of the classics to mix with divinity. This divine descent and human ascent is the Golden Chain he experiences in his life.

Moreover, this poem should not at all be disconnected from his wider poetic oeuvre about himself, where Christ features so prominently for Gregory's pastoral purposes. Abrams Rebillard claims that her research of over ninety shorter autobiographical poems yields Gregory's priestly character as "not the same as the resigned but vitriolic figure who groans about victimization in the more discursive *De rebus suis, De vita sua*, and *De seipso et episcopis*."[133] This is a strange bifurcation. Yes, Gregory groans about victimization in the *De rebus suis*. But his groaning is for a priestly purpose, a groaning not absent in the short poems as well.[134] Gregory's recounting of a folktale about one bitten by a malicious serpent illustrates his intent to engage in a personal and communal logostherapy.[135] The story goes that one who has been bitten reveals the sore only to those who have been similarly wounded by the serpent's venom. Why?

> They alone can appreciate its grievous character. So with me. I shall recount my woe to people united with me by love, or misfortune, or similar pain, because they alone could hear the tale with sympathy. They are capable of insight into the mysteries of a laden heart, who yearn to take upon their shoulders the burden of the cross, who have their portion in the fold of the great King, who love the path of rectitude and treat the fallen with compassion.[136]

[132] For example, Demoen mentions that the epithets of *epitarrothos*, *medeōn*, *mētieta*, and *hypsimedōn* "with Homer and Hesiod reserved for Zeus and the other Olympic gods, are used by Gregory for Christ or God." Gregory uses *hypsimedōn*, which means "ruling on high," 14 times. See Kristoffel Demoen, "The Attitude towards Greek Poetry in the Verse of Gregory Nazianzen," in *Early Christian Poetry: A Collection of Essays*, eds. J. den Boeft and A. Hilhorst, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae, vol. 22 (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 235–52, at p. 240. Also, see the parallel between *De rebus suis* 518–20 and Hesiod's *Works and Days* 267–69, as identified in Milovanović, "Gregory of Nazianzus's *De rebus suis*," 56.

[133] Abrams Rebillard, "Speaking for Salvation," 12.

[134] Abrams Rebillard herself has a section on "Groaning has become my task: Gregory at the hands of the impious," in "Speaking for Salvation," 108–22.

[135] Gregory often uses the image of the serpent to suggest the attack of evil upon him; cf. *De rebus suis* 618–19. For a poem addressed to Christ that features the serpent's attack, see *Carm.* 2.1.70, trans. in McGuckin, *Selected Poems*, 15. McGuckin changes the traditional title of the poem to read, "The Serpent."

[136] *De rebus suis* 239–46 (Tuilier and Bady, 18–19); trans. Meehan, 33. Gregory continues that for others who do not know the desire for the King in their inmost being such woes seem ridiculous. Cf. *De rebus suis* 104–5.

Gregory's poem to Christ is therapeutic, both for himself and his readers.

As expected in didactic epic, Gregory focuses on how his life's story can be pedagogical for others. Like Gregory, the reader can pray for Christ's help to live with sights set on heaven. Gregory says those who see his plight should tremble and improve their lives.[137] He also writes that a good person, and even a wicked one, can gain benefit from a better person, just as a blind person is helped by one who can see.[138] Finding various reasons for his distress, he prays to Christ:

> Or again, O saving Word, you may wish that people be educated by my misfortunes to hate the wickedness of the world. It is no lasting world, and brings everyone, good and bad, to woe. You may wish people to make haste towards that other world, the stable, the unshaken, the proper goal of pious souls.[139]

Gregory is not above reproving all others and making himself a model of a solitary commitment to Christ against all others. In an off-handed reproach, he again prays to Christ, saying that while others take refuge in all sorts of consolations, he alone turns only to Christ.[140] Such a statement of the betrayal by others of himself and Christ may not simply be a way for Gregory to lash out at others or an expression of self-pity. Rather, he offers his readers an example, like the Psalmist, of relying upon the Lord alone. When another reads a prayer one has written, a unity occurs between author and reader to lead them both to prayer, alone with the Lord.

Christ elevates the mind in the De rebus suis

Now that Gregory's pastoral concern in this didactic epic has been established, let us focus on how he describes the presence of Christ, for the elevation of his mind, through a series of invocations of Christ.[141] In addition, stories and descriptions of prayers punctuate the narrative, even when not directly addressed to Christ. Gregory's logostherapy is intended to raise the mind, both on the substantial level of a growing faith in Christ and on the stylistic level of the cultured measures of didactic epic.

Beginning with "O Christ the King!" the text's opening prayer announces the recurrent attention on Christ as ruling Gregory's life. Gregory crafts this prayerful beginning to suit the coming narrative of his experiences in life. He

[137] Cf. *De rebus suis* 351.
[138] Cf. *De rebus suis* 509–10.
[139] *De rebus suis* 564–68 (Tuilier and Bady, 38–39); trans. Meehan, 43 (alt.)
[140] Cf. *De rebus suis* 596–99.
[141] Bernardi, in fact, calls the entire text a long prayer (*Saint Grégoire de Nazianze*, 319).

gives four examples of prayers to Christ in the Old Testament and of one in the New Testament.[142] The Christological interpretation of the first reference to prayer stretches back to Pseudo-Barnabas and Justin Martyr.[143] In Israel's battle against Amalek's forces, Moses raised his hands in a cruciform prayer.[144] Unlike the second-century authors, however, Gregory interprets Moses' cruciform prayer, like the other Old Testament examples following it, to be addressed to Christ. Gregory then mentions Daniel stretching out his hands in the lions' den, Jonah opening wide his arms in the whale, and the three young men raising their arms in the Assyrian furnace.[145] The three Old Testament prayers that follow Moses' prayer, in their traditional gesture of uplifted arms, also assume a cruciform meaning.[146] His New Testament example comes from Christ's taming of the sea for the storm-tossed disciples by walking on it, calming the waves, and stilling the winds.[147] After an acknowledgment of his own need for help, Gregory returns to these images of prayer within the context of his life. He prays in the midst of war, wild beasts, fire, and storm.[148] These biblical images provide a lens through which Gregory wants his reader to interpret the terrible forces set against him and his assurance in Christ.[149]

[142] From this Christological interpretation of Old Testament prayer, one should be careful in interpreting Gregory's classical formulation in *Or*. 31.26 of the gradual progression of the three persons of the Trinity. For example, Bruce Marshall says, "[T]he history of Israel as recounted in the Old Testament explicitly discloses the Father, while the Son and the Spirit each wait for definitive revelation at an appropriate time. Gregory Nazianzen classically gives voice to this outlook." See Marshall, "Do Christians Worship the God of Israel?" in *Knowing the Triune God: The Work of the Spirit in the Practices of the Church*, eds. James J. Buckley and David S. Yeago (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 231–64, on p. 249. Then Marshall himself provides some caution: "Whether or not viewed in explicitly sequentialist terms, the idea that Israel's Lord is the same as the Father finds advocates across the tradition—often among theologians who, in almost the same breath, defend the claim that the God of Israel is the Son" (p. 250). Marshall gives Irenaeus *Adversus haereses* I.22.1; cf. III.6.4 for his patristic example.

[143] *Barn.* 12 and *Dial.* 90.4; 91.3; 93.5; 97.1; 111.1; 112.2; 131.4. Cf. Andrew Hofer, O.P., "Amalek and the Early Christian Battle for Scriptural Interpretation," *Communio: International Catholic Review* 36 (2009): 168–74.

[144] Cf. *De rebus suis* 1–2; Exod. 17: 8–14.

[145] Cf. Dan. 6: 2–29; Jonah 2: 1–11; Dan. 3:1–97, esp. 3: 51–90.

[146] Origen mentions the prayers of Moses, the three young men in the fiery furnace, Daniel, and Jonah among Old Testament examples of prayer in his treatise *On Prayer*, a work that mandates prayer through Christ to the Father, and forbids prayer to Christ himself. See Origen, *On Prayer* 13.2–4; 14.3. For Origen's practice of praising Christ at the end of the vast majority of his homilies, see Henri Crouzel, S.J., "Les Doxologies finales des homélies d'Origène selon le texte grec et les versions latines," in *Ecclesia Orans: Mélanges patristiques offerts au Père Adalbert G. Hamman*, ed. Victor Saxer (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1980), 95–107.

[147] Matt. 14: 22–33.

[148] Cf. *De rebus suis* 18–22.

[149] For a comparison, see how Gregory elsewhere recalls the presence of Christ as the champion of his teaching, with reference to the deliverance from lions, refreshment for the young men in the fire, and Jonah in the whale; *De vita sua* 671–78.

Between the announcement of the scriptural types of prayers and their application in Gregory's own life of petition, we encounter a bridge succinctly presenting his doctrine of Incarnation and deification:

> For many you have rescued soul and body from disease. You who are God became human and mingled with mortals (θνητοῖσιν ἐμίχθης). God from all time, you were manifested to us in the fullness of time, so that by becoming human you might make me God. Thus, when I call on you, come as blessed and propitious God. Come to me with helping hand, O my propitious God.[150]

In the first sentence, Gregory stresses the abundance of salvation offered by Christ the physician to those with diseases. His anthropology functions here to distinguish how Christ rescues the whole human being, soul and body. Although Gregory lays primacy on the soul, his theological anthropology supports his soteriology to include the salvation of the body, as we will see again below. The second sentence presents, in brief, Gregory's incarnational theology of mingling. Here, the emphasis is not merely on a mingling within the humanity of Jesus himself, but that the Word mingles with "mortals," i.e., God enters the human race and touches human lives in a human way. The reason for God becoming human is the very personal encounter between Gregory and Christ: that "you might make me God."[151] This first-person expression exemplifies Gregory's ceaseless attention to his divinization in a personal encounter with Christ.[152] After these statements of faith in the Incarnation and its purpose for divinization, Gregory prays for the application to his own life. In doing so, the hands stretched out in prayer, mentioned before this excerpt, now wait for the merciful God's helping hand.[153] The lack of any specific reference within Gregory's life makes this prayer, like the Psalms, to be a prayer that others, who are similarly surrounded by their foes, could make to Christ.

Also within this opening prayer, Gregory characteristically focuses on his mind. Gregory opens up his mind in prayer to Christ against the threats of his enemies:

> From these, O Christ, deliver me. Spread your sheltering wings about me always. O King, drive hateful cares far from your servant. Let not my mind be harassed by

[150] *De rebus suis* 13–18; trans. Meehan, 49 (alt.).

[151] Winslow, *Dynamics of Salvation*, 86–87, approvingly cites Grillmeier as an exception to ignorance that Christ's Incarnation is the basis for human divinization in Gregory. Grillmeier writes, "For his attention is taken up with the idea of the divinization of man, an idea for which the divinization of Christ's human nature is to supply the theological foundation." See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition* 1.370.

[152] Peter Gilbert says, "In reading Gregory's poetry, it becomes very clear that his view of self can in no way be divorced from that view he has of deification in Christ." Gilbert, "Person and Nature," 116.

[153] Gregory's reference for Christ's hand may also hearken back to Matt. 14: 31.

> grave anxieties, such as this world and the prince of this world devise for hapless mortals. They corrode the godlike image within as rust corrodes iron. The nobler form they reduce to kinship with the earth, so that the soul cannot succeed in elevating the earthbound element of flesh. On the contrary, the flesh drags the winged soul earthwards in misery, enfleshing it in sordid activities.[154]

Salvation means being united to God—united, first of all, in the *mind*, just as, in Christ, the Godhead is joined to the humanity through the mind.[155] Also, the parallelism between the Psalm 90 (91) image of the Lord's sheltering wings and Gregory's Platonic image of the "winged soul" (*Phaedrus* 246) should not be missed. Christ's sheltering wings are invoked so that Gregory's own soul can fly, elevating the flesh from the earth.

The announcement of the main theme, concerning the two gates, continues the subject of the prayer from the introduction, and is now drawn with stark alternatives. For example, Gregory contrasts those who have in their mind a foul spring of evil, and are concerned with the body, with those who behold God with the mind's pure eye.[156] The flesh of these latter people wastes away to a mere shadow, and so they tread lightly on the earth, as the Spirit buoys them up.[157] Gregory calls such people "mystics of the hidden life of Christ the King."[158]

Gregory repeatedly returns to the threats of being weighed down, especially in the secret attacks of the raging demon upon the mind, the anxieties of living with heavy responsibilities, and the bodily reality of human life on earth. He complains about how fickle he is in his mind, sometimes drawn to God and sometimes to the evil confusion of the world.[159] To counter all things set against him, Gregory writes that the Word of God overshadows all the twisted products of the mind.[160]

Much of the text deals with aspects of asceticism, wherein Gregory offers himself as a model and an anti-model in different respects, in order to further devotion to Christ. Gregory hopes to induce the body, through an ascetic life, to be re-formed with the image of the great God, like iron drawn to a

[154] *De rebus suis* 27–36 (Tuilier and Bady, 4–5); trans. Meehan, 26.

[155] Commenting on a similar idea found in *Or*. 29.19, Russell writes, "The 'double metathesis' enables Gregory to say that the eternal Son filled the human nature which he assumed through the mediation of the *nous* with divine life, so that human nature in general might be deified in principle, thus enabling the individual believer to be deified in an analogous fashion by union of his or her *nous* with Christ." See Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, 220. More will be said of the mind as mediation between divinity and the human body in the following chapter.

[156] Cf. *De rebus suis* 38–43.

[157] Cf. *De rebus suis* 46–47. Cf. Winslow, *Dynamics of Salvation*, 194; citing *Or*. 3.1; 11.5; 21.2, and 30.21. Winslow thinks divinization is, first of all, a spatial metaphor.

[158] *De rebus suis* 48 (Tuilier and Bady, 5); trans. Meehan, 26. Cf. *De rebus suis* 120–22.

[159] Cf. *De rebus suis* 493–95.

[160] Cf. *De rebus suis* 100–1; 285–88.

magnet.[161] Recounting the simplicity of his food and drink amidst the opulence of others, Gregory says such poverty, with Christ who always elevates his mind, is his best wealth.[162] Asceticism in chastity, struggling with the complexities of administering properties, his daily regimen, and his prayer are at the service of opening his mind to the divine fullness that Christ brings.

Gregory's three "calculated intrusions," in the style of the didactic epic master Hesiod, gives a significant insight into the author's Christocentric spirituality of elevating the mind.[163] The first two are Gospel stories that Gregory personalizes to blend with his autobiographical stories. The third is Gregory's own story that he "biblicizes" to blend with what is read in the Scriptures. As such, the stories exemplify the typical Gregorian mixing of Greek literature and Christian themes as well as of the mingling between Christ's life and the life of Gregory himself.

In the first, Gregory recounts the parable of the Good Samaritan, a figure which Irenaeus, and many after him, interpreted as referring to Christ.[164] Gregory does not immediately give a Christological interpretation. Rather, he simply recounts some details of the story and professes that he does not understand what lies hidden in the parable. Yet, his spiritual interpretation goes from telling his story, as of one *like* that of the man who was beset by robbers when going down to Jericho, to identifying himself *as* the man afflicted in the story itself.[165] The details may refer to incidents that can be identified in Gregory's life at the Council of Constantinople (381).[166] It is certainly possible that Gregory edited the poem after the Council. But one can also find evidence that he complained against his mistreatment at the hands of clergy concerning events before 381.[167] In any case, Gregory counts himself in

[161] Cf. *De rebus suis* 465–66.

[162] Cf. *De rebus suis* 75–76.

[163] Cf. Milovanović, "Gregory of Nazianzus's *De rebus suis* and the Tradition of Epic Didactic Poetry," 53–56.

[164] Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 3.17.3.

[165] Milovanović marvels at Gregory's use of Homeric simile with Christian content here. She says, "[T]his is a deeply considered and carefully executed comparison where every word carries its appointed weight and contributes to an intricate and deliberate pattern of sound and meaning. And lest we forget—that impressive display of verbal virtuosity is realized in a language that had long since fallen out of use, the Homeric (Ionian) language of the heroic epic." See Milovanović, "Gregory of Nazianzus's *De rebus suis*," 54.

[166] Cf. Milovanović, "Gregory of Nazianzus's *De rebus suis*," 48. This prompts her to think that the poem was written late in Gregory's career. On the other hand, Bernardi thinks that the description of the illustrious city in line 382 must have been added to the early poem after the year 381. See his note in *Poèmes Personnels II, 1, 1–11*, 27 n. 95. Similarly, McGuckin thinks the poem was edited again after 381, perhaps in 382, reflecting some concerns from the Council of Constantinople. See his "Autobiography as Apologia," 160.

[167] For example, Gregory complains bitterly against Basil's mistreatment and abandonment of him. In *De vita sua* 463–85, he prefers the wild beasts to Basil, for at least they have greater loyalty. Demoen interprets this poem's section to refer covertly to Basil in the Sasima conflict. See Demoen, "Some Remarks on the Life and Poems of Gregory Nazianzen," 176.

the text as the man stripped of the grace of Christ by the robber who hates souls, just as that one did to Adam. Gregory then prays to beg for the mercy of Christ.

The second "calculated intrusion" is similarly divided into two parts. In the first, Gregory tells the story from Luke 18: 10–14 of the Pharisee and the publican praying in the temple area. In Gregory's embellished account, the publican's prayer enumerates what will not save him (law, tithes, good works), in contrast to what the Pharisee tells God he has done. Gregory then says that he is the publican in God's sight. He prays with a prayer that combines elements of Homeric prayers and the Christian attitude toward prayer from this story. Gregory says that he himself has done nothing worthy of God. Rather, in the style of Homeric supplication, he reminds God that if his parents ever sacrificed or did anything pleasing to God, then God should drive off evil anxieties. Gregory asks God to help him as he hastens on the heavenly road, for he is God's worshipper and portion. Although Gregory does not specifically say that God is Christ in this calculated intrusion, it is apparent from the description and the context of the other intrusions that this prayer is similarly spoken to Christ.

The third scene comes from Gregory's own life which he expresses in biblical terms. Gregory recounts his mother's prayer to Christ the King so that she may offer a boy for him to keep within his fold. Gregory then becomes a sacred victim, a living victim. Gregory says that Christ bound him and put a rein upon his flesh, breathing into him a fervent love of holy wisdom and of monastic life. Such blending in this calculated intrusion, and the previous two, testifies to the remarkable dynamic of mixing Hellenistic culture and faith in Christ.

Near the end of the *De rebus suis*, Gregory again addresses Christ the King directly.[168] He makes various petitions, gives reasons for his present distress, and returns to petitions in an overtly scriptural imitation. First, Gregory, who is beset by enemies, asks not to be abandoned by Christ. He wants to be confirmed in heavenly hope; and he wants all his woes to disappear with the puffs of wind. As for the reasons for his distress, he offers a number of possibilities. Perhaps Christ subdues Gregory's spirit because of his wrongdoing. Perhaps Christ tames him, as one trains a colt, by exercises of endurance. Gregory asks if that is because of his spiritual pride, as religious people of fickle mind are susceptible to that.[169] As we already saw in looking at his ministerial intention, he considers the possibility that Christ wants him to experience these misfortunes to teach others. In any case, for Gregory, such matters belong to the heights of wisdom. Gregory confesses the limitations of his mind in the face of reading the ways of providence. Again, he emphasizes

[168] Beginning in line 547. [169] Cf. *De rebus suis* 562.

the Christological dimension that even though crass minds cannot see the purpose of things, he believes that all things are for the best with the Word.[170] In a comparison of his life with the cosmos, Gregory then prays with confidence that the Word bends the rudder of the universe as the helmsman while we sail along the rough waves of this life with all its dangerous reefs.[171]

In the text's climax, Gregory writes that he drops to his knees before the Word and assumes the position of various persons in dire need, as recorded in the Scriptures. He first refers to himself as the rich man in the netherworld's torments, asking that Lazarus be sent to refresh his tongue. To begin here may be something of a surprise, as the rich man in Luke 17: 19–31 is told that such a request is impossible! Gregory, quite conscious of this, prays his request not to Abraham, as did the rich man, but to the Word so that Lazarus be sent to help him and that Abraham's ample bosom have a place for the rich man in agony.[172] Gregory then asks that Christ display all of his miracles for Gregory's sake.[173] He quickly gives a dazzling array of petitions from the perspectives of those helped by Christ. Gregory prays from the perspective of: a woman afflicted by a hemorrhage, a demoniac, a leper, a blind and deaf man, a man with the withered hand, a mute, a lame, one hungry for a morsel of bread, one frightened by the raging sea, an apostle on the mount of the transfiguration, and Lazarus dead in the tomb. Gregory concludes this series by a reminder of Christ's power for destruction, asking that he not be treated like the barren fig tree in the Gospel.[174] Gregory wants his life to take the shape of anyone from the Gospel who receives Christ's mercy.

After recalling how alone he is, Gregory seems to finish in weariness, expecting something more grievous. Yet, the text does not end in this pessimism. Rather, Gregory concludes in a Trinitarian prayer for mercy. Of the Trinity, the Son receives the longest description. He is first named in the description of the Father, for the Father is called both the Beginning and the Father of the Beginning, who is the Immortal Son.[175] Gregory then continues in a list of Christological titles: "You are the Great Light sprung from similar light; circling in a manner that is ineffable from One to One.

[170] Cf. *De rebus suis* 571–72.

[171] Cf. *De rebus suis* 573–75.

[172] Cf. *De rebus suis* 577–81. Does such a turn of address from Abraham to Christ suggest the possibility of a final return of those suffering in Gehenna? Gregory explicitly brings up the issue in order to say that he will not discuss it in *De rebus suis* 545–46. Brian E. Daley, S.J., comments, "On two key issues of Origenist eschatology, the purgative nature of all punishment and the hope for universal salvation, Gregory offers a cautious, undogmatic support of the Origenist position." See his treatment in *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 83–85, at p. 84.

[173] Cf. *De rebus suis* 582.

[174] Cf. *De rebus suis* 594–95; Mark 11: 12–22. Gregory's recurrent attention to the mysteries of Christ's life, in this text and throughout his writings, should make readers cautious of assessments which obscure Christ's humanity.

[175] Cf. *De rebus suis* 624.

O Son of God, Wisdom, King, Word, Truth, Image of the Archetype, Nature equal to the Begetter, Shepherd, Lamb, Victim, God, Man, Highpriest."[176] When he turns to the Spirit, Gregory similarly combines both the theology of Trinitarian relations and the economy of sanctification. The Spirit is described as proceeding from the Father, and then is spoken of in the Spirit's divinizing role.[177] Gregory expresses his prayer—which shows the definitive resolution of which of the two ways he is taking in life—that he be mingled with the whole divinity, both here and in the hereafter.[178] His final thought soars in the joy of unending hymns.[179] Significantly, Gregory's didactic epic on his life addressed to Christ in prayer does not end in Christ. Rather, by opening his mind to Christ and living according to the way of Christ through the trials of life, Gregory longs to attain enjoyment of the Blessed Trinity forever in song.

CONCLUSION

There are many ways to tell a life's story. The most impressive modern biography of Gregory is John McGuckin's intellectual biography, a form well suited for intellectual historians studying a most intellectual figure. Yet, Gregory himself writes about his life in ways that suggest other approaches. Over and over again, we see that Gregory tells his life's story evoking Christ as the one who stands by him. From Gregory's point of view, he and Christ are inseparable. His relationship with Christ is so central to his life, and so perduring, that he narrates his own story in constant dialogue with the Word incarnate.

This chapter considered Gregory's Christomorphic autobiography in three parts. First, it overviewed the autobiographical interest throughout his writings. It situated his autobiographical turn from the points of view of modern scholarship, traditions accepting Gregory's authority, the models of Marcus Aurelius, Julian, and Libanius, and scriptural precedents. Second, it focused on Gregory's evoking of Christ in the ninety-nine poems *De seipso*. It considered the different ways that Christ appears in the poetry, and then briefly sketched the stages of Gregory's life as he writes of it in relation to Christ. Third, it analyzed Gregory's didactic epic, the *De rebus suis*. By attending to its literary genre, we were able to assess Gregory's literary prowess in cultivating a Christomorphic text of high culture. Through epic verse, Gregory forges the closest of bonds between Christ and himself in a lesson for others about choosing the way of Christ over the way of the world. In

[176] *De rebus suis* 625–29 (Tuilier and Bady, 43); trans. Meehan, 45.
[177] Cf. *De rebus suis* 630–31.
[178] Cf. *De rebus suis* 633.
[179] Cf. *De rebus suis* 634.

particular, the poem demonstrates, by its prayerful attention to Christ, the mind's elevation. We, the readers, are likewise lifted up by Christ with Gregory.

Rather than creating false personas out of some literary or psychology inadequacy, Gregory uses his autobiographical poetry, in part, to express his Christological doctrine and devotion, both for the benefit of himself and for his readers, who may be likewise formed by the Word. When Gregory speaks of his life, it seems that he must speak of Christ's presence to him. His readers, too, will do the same. We turn in Chapters 3–5 to the perspective of Gregory's autobiographical Christology, for it seems that he must speak of his own presence when writing of Christ's life. Gregory's readers, too, will follow him and share in this mixing of lives with Christ himself.

3

Autobiographical Christology I

The Mixtures of Gregory and Christ

In Chapter 2, we considered how Gregory writes and rewrites his life, often in poetic measures, so that it can be at the service of the Word. Now we begin to focus on Gregory's distinctive approach of writing about Christ's life through himself. In this autobiographical Christology, Gregory frames the Incarnation as the mystery of the Word coming to mingle with human life, the life that Gregory knows to be his own.

Take, for an immediate example, the celebrated fourth *Theological Oration*, where Gregory responds to a Eunomian understanding of the Son's relation to the Father. His opponents have interpreted the Scriptures on Christ's subordination, without adequately recognizing how the Word blends himself with the human condition of sin. Gregory speaks in the first person, as he typically does, of the need for Christ's salvation. "The one who releases me from the curse was called 'curse' because of me," says Gregory, "'the one who takes away the world's sin' was called 'sin' and is made a new Adam to replace the old." Gregory applies the Pauline language in a most personal way. Christ is curse and sin, because Gregory knows his own curse and sin. As the new Adam, Christ re-creates not simply the human race, but Gregory in particular. Gregory continues, "In just this way too, as head of the whole body, he appropriates my lack of submission. So long as I am an insubordinate rebel with passions which deny God, my lack of submission will be referred to Christ." Christ comes to take responsibility not simply in an Incarnation a long time ago, but every time that Gregory sins. Every time that Gregory disobeys God, Christ steps in to lay claim to Gregory's weakness and save him. Gregory gives the punch: "But when all things are put in submission under him, when transformed they obediently acknowledge him, then will Christ bring me forward, me who have been saved, and make his subjection complete."[1]

[1] *Or.* 30.5 (SC 250.234); trans. Williams and Wickham, 96; cf. Gal. 3: 13, John 1: 29, 2 Cor. 5: 21, 1 Cor. 15: 22 and 45, Col. 1: 18, Eph. 5: 23, and 1 Cor. 15: 27–28.

Gregory is, of course, alluding to 1 Cor. 15: 20–28, but there the Apostle Paul says that the last enemy to be destroyed is death, and then the Son will be subjected to his God and Father. Gregory's autobiographical Christology finds that the subjection is complete when Christ brings Gregory forward as one saved.

In this oration's debate against the Eunomians, Gregory defends Christ's full divinity, which is often emphasized in scholarly accounts. He also asserts Christ's full identity with Gregory's human life. Christ even takes to himself Gregory's voice and sin, through a remarkable mixing. The Psalm's cry of "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me" from Christ on the cross, expresses *our* condition of being forsaken, explains Gregory.[2]

Continuing in this oration, Gregory comments on Heb. 5: 7–8, and explains that Christ's obedience, tears, entreaty, and his Father's hearing of Christ's prayer "wondrously form a drama and plot for our sake."[3] Appealing to Phil. 2: 7, Gregory teaches: "As Word, he was neither obedient nor disobedient—the terms apply to amenable subordinates or inferiors who deserve punishment. But as the "form of a slave," he comes down to the same level as his fellow-slaves." Obedience is not found in the Son's divine relationship with the Father, but precisely in the Son's state of being human. "Receiving an alien 'form,' he bears the whole of me, along with all that is mine, in himself, so that he may consume within himself the meaner element." The Word's condescension to the level of being in slavery actually lifts all that Gregory is, and all that he has, for purification. Gregory finishes his thought with striking biblical allusions of divine power: "as fire consumes wax or the sun ground-mist, so that I may share in what is his, on account of the intermingling (*διὰ τὴν σύγκρασιν*)."[4] Because Christ bears all of Gregory within himself, one cannot understand Gregory's Christ without understanding Gregory and his need to be saved. Their lives are inexorably mixed.

This chapter examines Gregory's wonderment, expressed through his mixture language, that describes the utter closeness of the incarnate Word to Gregory's life. To make this argument, the chapter proceeds in four steps. The first step examines "mixture" as Gregory's distinctive approach to the Incarnation. The second explores the sources of Gregory's mixture language. By surveying the philosophical background, we will discover a more complex reality than normally given in Gregorian scholarship from which to assess

[2] *Or.* 30.5 (SC 250.234, 236); cf. Ps. 21: 1(LXX) and Matt. 27: 46. Cf. John P. Egan, S.J. "God-Forsaken: The Crucified Christ or Suffering Humanity? Current Evaluation of Jürgen Moltmann's and Gregory Nazianzen's Comments on the Crucified Christ's Cry of Abandonment," in *Tradition and Innovation: Faith and Consent. Essays by Jesuits from a Canadian Perspective*, ed. Jos. B. Gavin, S.J. (Regina: Campion College Press, 1983), 61–80.

[3] *Or.* 30.6 (SC 250.236).

[4] *Or.* 30.6 (SC 250.236); trans. Williams and Wickham, 97 (alt.); cf. Phil. 2: 17, Ps. 67: 3 (LXX), and Sir. 43: 4 (LXX).

Gregory's distinctive use of mixture language. The third discusses how Gregory uses the rhetoric of mixing and blending to describe his own human condition. This anthropology is necessary to appreciate Gregory's Christology, for how could we appreciate the Incarnation if we do not know what it means for Gregory to be human in the first place? Finally, the fourth step studies Gregory's use of mixture language for the Incarnation. It does this through detailed considerations of Christ as the "New Mixture" for Gregory's healing, the mediation of the mind, and select Gregorian terms for the meaning of multiplicity and unity in the Incarnation. The chapter concludes with the significance of mixture language for a re-evaluation of Gregory's thought on the Incarnation, especially as it pertains to the unity of believers in Christ. In this way, a study of the mixture language of Gregory's autobiographical Christology leads us to view his pastoral purpose for writing on Christ, a purpose for his Christology that we will see throughout the rest of this book.

MIXTURE AS GREGORY'S APPROACH TO THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION

Mixture language expresses for many early Christian theologians, in non-biblical terms, the scriptural witness of Jesus as both divine and human. Therefore, we do well to recall, first, that Gregory bases his incarnational Christology on biblical texts. John 1: 14, John 6: 38, 2 Cor. 8: 9, and Phil. 2: 7 are but a few of the key verses at Gregory's disposal to ponder the mystery.[5] Gregory also loves to formulate what resulted from the Incarnation in paradoxical form, with contrasting actions and titles of Christ in juxtaposition, as they appear at considerable length in *Or.* 29.19–20.

Early writers also employed various philosophical and rhetorical means to understand the biblical revelation and proclaim its teachings, particularly in the face of doctrinal controversies. The terms of *hypostasis*, *prosōpon*, *physis*, *ousia*, and *henōsis* have garnered such special treatment that they have been used in scholarship to frame the entire history of Christology. This perspective has been detrimental to appreciating Gregory on his own terms; it simply must be admitted that he has other ways of evoking the mystery of Christ.[6]

[5] Frederick Norris suggests that Gregory's soteriology of *kenōsis* and *theōsis* springs from interpreting Philippians 2 and 2 Corinthians 8. See Norris, "Gregory Nazianzen's Doctrine of Jesus Christ," pp. ii, 129–48.

[6] Moreover, even when he uses those terms hallowed in subsequent dogmatic statements, he may use them in an unexpected way—as we have already seen him speak of the eternal Son as a *physis* twice in his poetry. See *Carm.* 2.1.2.3 and *De rebus suis* 628.

For example, Gregory characteristically forgoes technical terms and speaks simply in numerical values, such as "one" (*hen* in the neuter or *heis* in the masculine) and "double" (*diplous*) or "both" (*amphō*). An insightful approach that avoids some hazards of modern treatments comes from Christopher Beeley. When considering whether Gregory's Christology is "basically unitive or dualist,"[7] Beeley makes a strong case for a unitive Christology. He points out instances where Gregory calls Christ not only "one" in the masculine (*heis*), but also "one" in the neuter (*hen*).[8] If one must choose between the two alternatives of Gregory's Christology as basically unitive or dualist, one should agree with Beeley.

But one could still question Beeley's framing of the problem and its resolution. Does Gregory's thinking, in fact, give "the fullest possible treatment," as Beeley claims, of Christ's human existence within his divine identity? A more modest assessment may find that fuller treatments of Christ's human existence come only later, such as by Maximus the Confessor in the seventh-century Monothelite controversy.[9] It should, by all means, be granted that Gregory says Christ is "one" (*heis*, *hen*) more than he says that Christ is "double" (*diplous*). But for Gregory, Christ is also *diplous*, a word explicitly rejected by Cyril of Alexandria, who similarly despised Gregory's beloved term *krasis*.[10] Oneness in Beeley's continuing research leads him to argue that Cyril learned his "one nature" (*mia physis*) formulation from Gregory.[11] Furthermore, Beeley

[7] See Beeley, "Gregory of Nazianzus on the Unity of Christ," in *In the Shadow of the Incarnation: Essays on Jesus Christ in the Early Church in Honor of Brian E. Daley, S.J.*, ed. Peter W. Martens (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 97–120, at p. 98.

[8] For examples of what Beeley calls "advanced formulations" of Gregory using both masculine and neuter pronouns for Christ's unity, see *Ep.* 101.5(21) and *Or.* 29.19; 38.13–15 (= 45.9, 26–27); 39.12–13, 17; 40.6, 33, 45; 43.38, 61, 64; 44.4; 45.2, 13, 22, 28–29. See Beeley, "Gregory of Nazianzus on the Unity of Christ," 119 n. 33. Gregory's emphasis on Christ as "one," even in the neuter, influenced Thomas Aquinas. See his *Summa Theologiae* III, q. 17, a. 1, ad 2. For an accusation that Gregory's position is incorrect in Catholic doctrine, see Tixeront, *History of Dogmas* 2.127.

[9] For example, Norris writes, "Nazianzen's discussion of perfection and completeness [in Christ's humanity] makes the union explicable but not necessarily operative. The ability of the human will to act within the union is only tentatively posited and never fully developed. Gregory probably never even recognized this problem, but in the end, it is the major weakness of his Christology." Norris, "Gregory Nazianzen's Doctrine of Jesus Christ," 201.

[10] Not acknowledging Cyril's detestation of *krasis* may alter assessments of how Antiochene the Council of Chalcedon was. For example, Beeley writes, "The language of blending would later be condemned at Chalcedon, on the prompting of the Antiochenes, for seeming to compromise the transcendence of the Son's divine nature." Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 131. For Beeley's more nuanced position that recognizes Cyril's own condemnation of the term, see Beeley, "Cyril of Alexandria and Gregory Nazianzen: Tradition and Complexity in Patristic Christology," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 17 (2009): 381–419, at p. 416.

[11] See Beeley, "Cyril of Alexandria and Gregory Nazianzen," 398. Whereas, "one nature" is never found in Gregory, Cyril could have found the phrase of "one incarnate nature of God the Word" in a supposedly Athanasian text, now known to be Apollinarian. See its occurrence in *Ep. ad Jovianum* 1 (Lietzmann, 250–51). For a brief treatment, see Wickham, *Cyril of Alexandria:*

has gone on to say that Gregory was "perfectly comfortable" with "Apollinarius's one-nature language."[12] Although Beeley is right in emphasizing the single subject in Gregory's Christology, Gregory never says that Christ has only a single nature.

To complement Beeley's research, more can be done to explore the way Gregory, through perplexing mixture imagery, evokes the mystery of Christ. Beeley is not far removed from stressing an autobiographical Christology where Gregory gives an impressively full treatment of *his own human existence* mixed with the mystery of Christ. Whereas, Gregory is adamant that Christ has a rational soul, he pays scant attention to the details of its inner workings. On the other hand, Gregory considers, to an extraordinary degree, how his own soul is blended with the Word. While we have seen that Gregory employs in *Ep*. 101.5(21) and *Or*. 30.5 the same term of intermingling (*synkrasis*), classical authors made use of a range of mixture language pointing in various ways both to unity and plurality. One feature common to all is that a mixture, in broadest terms, makes oneness from multiplicity, but still bears something of multiplicity within it.[13] When the technical language for mixtures seems too abstruse, authors will commonly provide images as exemplary models. Gregory is no exception. One image for him towers in importance over all others. Gregory's proposed model in *Ep*. 101.5(18–21) for the blending of God and the human—like many other early theologians—is that of the relationship between the soul and body.[14] By beginning with a philosophical background

Select Letters, ed. and trans. Lionel R. Wickham, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 62–63 n. 3. Also, the phrase "one nature" appears in other places in Apollinarian literature, such *as De unione* 5 (Lietzmann, 187), frag. 10 (Lietzmann, 207*), Ep. ad Dionysium (A)* 2–3, 6 (Lietzmann, 257–59).

[12] Beeley, *The Unity of Christ*, 342 n. 74.

[13] This phrase has been written to cover the range of philosophical definitions for various types of mixtures—even though some things put together are said not to have true oneness, and other things put together are said not to have an abiding multiplicity. In the former, there is still some way of considering the mixture as one (such as one heap of various substances) and in the latter, some way of considering the mixture as bearing multiplicity (such as a *tertium quid*, which, by its very name, recalls the two prior substances).

[14] For example, Richard A. Norris in *Manhood and Christ: A Study in the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963) notes that theologians as diverse as Apollinarius of Laodicea, Gregory of Nyssa, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Nemesius of Emesa commonly employ the analogy of the soul–body union to explain the union of divinity and humanity in Christ (p. 66). One important exception to the use of the anthropological model is Diodore of Tarsus, if the hostile source of Severus of Antioch can be accepted as a reliable witness. Diodore writes, "Why do you use the analogy of the ruling powers of the soul and the body? For the soul does not reign by itself, nor does the body reign by itself. But God the Word reigns before (the existence of) the flesh. Thus, the relationship of the soul and the body is not like that of God the Word and the flesh." This fragment, preserved in Severus of Antioch, *Contra Impium Grammaticum*, ed. and trans. J. Lebon, *Or*. 3.26 (*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* 102 [1933], p. 45), is in Rowan A. Greer, "The Antiochene Christology of Diodore of Tarsus," *Journal of Theological Studies,* n.s. 17 (1966): 327–41, at p. 333. Cyril of Alexandria uses the body–soul model more than any other image to explicate the Incarnation. For discussion, see

to mixtures, we will consider Gregory's appreciation for the mixture of his human life, and then the Word's mixture with human life in the Incarnation for Gregory's salvation.[15]

PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND FOR GREGORY'S MIXTURE LANGUAGE

It has become commonplace to gesture toward Stoicism to account for Gregory's mixture language.[16] Nonna Verna Harrison has contributed studies on Gregory's mixture language that features Stoicism and draws some attention to Neoplatonism.[17] More recently, she comments on the terms *mixis* and *krasis* exclusively in their Stoic background as they appear in *Or*. 38.13 to describe the Incarnation. She calls them "Stoic technical terms" referring to "a kind of mixing in which two ingredients are combined so that they permeate each other, yet each retains its own nature and characteristics, so they could be separated while retaining their integrity."[18]

McGuckin, *Cyril of Alexandria*, 198–201, and Steven A. McKinion, *Words, Imagery, and the Mystery of Christ: A Reconstruction of Cyril of Alexandria's Christology*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 55 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 67–71.

[15] The structure of looking at Gregory's account of the human as the first mixture before considering the Incarnation as the second mixture was taken up by Portmann. See Franz Xaver Portmann, O.S.B., *Die göttliche Paidagogia bei Gregor von Nazianz*, Kirchengeschichtliche Quellen und Studien 3 (St. Ottilien: Eos Verlag, 1954), 63–74 and 109–24.

[16] Portmann gives much attention to mixture language and speaks of its supposedly Stoic origin. See Portmann, *Die göttliche Paidagogia bei Gregor von Nazianz*. 64. Cf. Aloys Grillmeier, S.J., "Die anthropologisch-christologische Sprache des Leontius von Byzanz und ihre Beziehung zu den Symmikta Zetemata des Neuplatonikers Porphyrius," in *Fragmente zur Christologie. Studien zum altkirchlichen Christusbild*, ed. Theresia Hainthaler (Herder: Freiburg, 1997), 264–76. Norris writes, "The philosophical category employed to speak of the union is that of mixing or blending. The terms are evidently borrowed from Stoic usage and have a Christian background." See Norris, "Gregory Nazianzen's Doctrine of Jesus Christ," 85. Moreschini says that *krasis* and *mixis* are of a Stoic origin, emphasizing that the two preserve their proper characteristics. See SC 358:56. Elm says that *krasis* and *mixis* are originally Stoic notions, citing Origen, *On First Principles* 2.6.3, and Althaus, *Die Heilslehre des heiligen Gregors von Nazianz*, 57–60. See Susanna Elm, "'O Paradoxical Fusion!': Gregory of Nazianzus on Baptism and Cosmology (*Orations* 38–40)" in *Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions*, eds. Ra'anan S. Boustan and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 296–315, at p. 300 n 11.

[17] Nonna Verna Harrison, "Some Aspects of St. Gregory the Theologian's Soteriology," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 34 (1989): 11–18; "Perichoresis in the Greek Fathers," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 35 (1991): 53–65; *St. Gregory of Nazianzus: Festal Orations*, translation with introduction and commentary by Nonna Verna Harrison, Popular Patristics Series 36 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2008), 52–56.

[18] Harrison, *Festal Orations*, 52; cf. Verna Harrison, "Illumined from All Sides by the Trinity: Neglected Themes in Gregory's Trinitarian Theology," in *Re-reading Gregory of Nazianzus*, ed. Christopher A. Beeley, 13–30, at p. 21, where she says that *synkrasis* is "a Stoic technical term that

This differs considerably from Harry Wolfson's argument on mixture language. Wolfson reviews at length Aristotelian and Stoic discussions of physical union, organizing them into five categories: union of composition, Aristotelian union of mixture, Stoic union of mixture, union of confusion, and union of predominance. Turning to early Christian models for the Incarnation, Wolfson claims that of these five, "The only analogy that was suitable for their purpose [i.e., the purpose of those whom Wolfson calls the orthodox Fathers] was the union of 'predominance.'"[19] Even though the Fathers use the language of mixture and composition, they do so "only in the sense of 'predominance.'"[20] In other words, Aristotle's identification of "predominance," in Peripatetic thought, is not a true mixture; for Wolfson, it is the proper way to understand patristic expressions of mixture for the Incarnation. Wolfson further finds that predominance "was not meant to be used as an explanation of the unity of person in the union of soul and body in man."[21] With this juxtaposition, Wolfson effectively sunders the link between the mixture of the human with the mixture of Christ made by Gregory and other theologians.

Wolfson analyzes Gregory's mixture language for the Incarnation in one paragraph, not including the treatment of perichoresis, and his study has not received adequate attention in Gregorian scholarship.[22] His call to study Aristotle deserves a response. Richard Sorabji has subsequently studied the schools of philosophy on mixtures in considerable detail.[23] With reference to Wolfson, Sorabji gives scant treatment to the Christian appropriation of the classical controversy.[24] He says that although one would suspect that orthodox Christians would draw upon the Stoic terminology, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa favor the Aristotelian idea of obliteration akin to those who hold only one nature in Christ.[25] Is that true? Moreover, does Wolfson's

the Cappadocians borrowed and used theologically." Harrison is commenting on *Or*. 31.14 in reference to the activities of the three divine persons.

[19] Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, vol. 1: *Faith, Trinity, Incarnation*, 3d edn. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 386.

[20] Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 386.

[21] Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 386.

[22] Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 387 where he gives *Or*. 29.19 as an example that shows Gregory's similarity to Aristotelian predominance. For a critique of Wolfson's argument concerning Apollinarius, see Richard Norris, *Manhood and Christ*, 107–11. For Wesche's acknowledgment and quick dismissal of the question of predominance, see Wesche, "'Mind' and 'Self' in the Christology of Saint Gregory the Theologian: Saint Gregory's Contribution to Christology and Christian Anthopology," 37 n. 7.

[23] Richard Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion: Theories in Antiquity and their Sequel* (London: Duckworth, 1988), 3–122.

[24] Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, 120–21.

[25] Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, 120. The only example from Gregory of Nazianzus is the one provided by Wolfson, *Or*. 29.19. For the most recent considerations of Gregory of Nyssa's mixture language, see esp. Sarah Coakley, "'Mingling' in Gregory of Nyssa's Christology:

position that Aristotelian predominance pertains to the Incarnation, but not to the soul–body unity, apply to our Gregory's thought? To sort out this complexity of issues, we can return, first, to the philosophical treatments on mixtures available in Gregory's time.

The pre-Socratic philosophers, such as Anaxagoras and Empedocles, proffered many speculations about the world's mixtures, but it was not until Aristotle that the very concept of mixture received a refined definition.[26] Aristotle's influence on Gregory in this, as well as in other matters, albeit at times indirect, should be better appreciated.[27] In his treatise *On Generation and Corruption*, Aristotle asks questions concerning mixture (*peri mixeōs*): What is mixture, and what is that which can be mixed? Of what things and under what conditions is mixture a property? Does mixture exist, or is it false to assert its existence?[28] To clarify these matters, Aristotle must distinguish how mixture differs from both the coming to be in generation and the passing away in corruption.

Of the different possibilities for a mixture, Aristotle first considers a composition (*synthesis*), such as wheat and barley grains juxtaposed to one another. This is called a mixture, but, in reality, this is something other than mixture. For so long as the constituents are preserved in particles, that is neither a mixture (*mixis*) nor a blending (*krasis*). Aristotle then looks at action and passion among different types of matter. Those which have the same matter act upon one another and are acted upon. Other agents act upon things of different matter, but are not reciprocally acted upon. Among the former group, those things which are reciprocally active and passive, there is a twofold division. If one is of a great quantity or bulk and the other is much smaller, the effect is not mixture (*mixis*), but the increase of the dominant, i.e., the littler and weaker one is transformed into the larger and more powerful one. Aristotle illustrates this predominance by speaking of a drop of wine dissolving and being changed to merge into ten thousand gallons of water. On the

A Reconsideration," in *Who is Jesus Christ for Us Today?: Pathways to Contemporary Christology*, eds. Andreas Schuele and Günter Thomas (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 72–84; and Morwenna Ludlow, *Gregory of Nyssa, Ancient and (Post)modern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 97–107.

[26] Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, 61–78.

[27] Portmann overlooks Aristotle's contribution to the ancient discussion of mixtures. This omission continues in Althaus, Harrison, and Beeley, who directly, or indirectly, look to Portmann. Grillmeier considers Aristotle only in passing, as his concern is on the connections between Porphyry, Nemesius, and Leontius of Byzantium. See Grillmeier, "Die anthropologisch-christologische Sprache des Leontius von Byzanz und ihre Beziehung zu den Symmikta Zetemata des Neuplatonikers Porphyrius." Cf. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 374–79. On a related note, Milovanović quotes an anonymous reviewer of her work: "it should never surprise when Gregory prefers Aristotle to Plato; he often does; his whole sense of language and epistemology favors Aristotle." See Milovanović, "Gregory of Nazianzus: *Ars Poetica* ," 510 n. 23.

[28] *On Generation and Corruption* 1.10 (327a).

other hand, if the two are of comparable quantities in a certain equilibrium, then each of them changes and acts towards the dominant (in different respects). Neither becomes the other, but both become something intermediate with common properties. Thus, only those agents are mixable—properly speaking—which can suffer action reciprocally. This is especially seen among those whose shape is more readily adaptable, such as liquids. Mixture, for Aristotle, thus results from things that are reciprocally susceptible and readily adaptable, or divisible, in shape. Such things mix without having been destroyed, and without enduring unaltered. In short, "mixture is the union of things mixable, which have been altered."[29]

Aristotle provides further analysis of mixture elsewhere in *On Generation and Corruption*, as well as in other writings, such as his *Topics*, *Metaphysics*, and *On Sense and the Sensible*. Occasionally, he uses the term "composition" (*synthesis*) in a general sense for a mixture, referring to what results from a mixture of the elements as a composite (*syntheton*).[30] Although he speaks of *mixis* and *krasis* as synonyms in *On Generation and Corruption*, in the *Topics*, he distinguishes the former as a genus which is not a blending (*krasis*) when it involves solids.[31] Once he gives the example of honey-water as a blending (*krasis*), contrasting this with things bound together like a bundle, things glued together like a book, and things nailed together like a casket.[32] Moreover, he emphasizes that a mixture of bodies does not occur the way in which some suppose, as if imperceptibly small objects become juxtaposed to one another, but rather that they are wholly interpenetrated.[33] Importantly, when Aristotle considers the union of soul and body as that of form and matter, he calls that which results "one thing" (*hen*).[34] Aristotle also cautions that the "one thing," or unity, is said in many different ways, just as "to be."[35] We can, and, indeed, must, distinguish how things combined are called "one."

Various witnesses report the Stoic thought stemming from Chrysippus, an influential philosopher of the third century before Christ, which provides an alternative to Aristotelian mixture language. We consider, first, the anthologist Stobeaus, who may have lived in the fifth century after Christ, and then the Peripatetic philosopher Alexander of Aphrodisias, who wrote around A.D. 200

[29] *On Generation and Corruption* 1.10 (328b).

[30] *On Generation and Corruption* 2.8 (234b); *Metaphysics* 8.2 (1042b).

[31] *Topics* 4.2 (122b). *Pace* Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 367, where he says from Aristotle that *mixis* is for solids and *krasis* is for liquids. According to this passage from Aristotle, *mixis* is the more generic term, but *krasis* is a subset of *mixis* to describe liquids. Thus, according to the *Topics*, *mixis* could be said of either solids or liquids. Also, Richard Norris seems unaware of this distinction in Aristotle. See Norris, *Manhood and Christ*, 68.

[32] *Metaphysics* 8.2 (1042b).

[33] *On Sense and the Sensible* 3 (440a–440b).

[34] *Metaphysics* 12.10 (1075b); *On the Soul* 2.1 (412b); cf. Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 370.

[35] *On the Soul* 2.1 (412b).

against the Stoics.[36] The Stoic teaching on mixture became famous for its blending of the whole (*krasis di' holōn*). This theory was used especially to speak of how *pneuma*, which is material in Stoic physics, can permeate a body so that—as some say—body goes through body. As a caution, Robert B. Todd says that the doxographical tradition severely circumscribes the value of Stobaeus and Alexander of Aphrodisias as evidence for the Stoic theory.[37] Moreover, sometimes the elaborate rebuttals of Stoic physics on blending lost sight of what was really at stake for the Stoics themselves. According to Todd, the Stoic blending theory was not meant to represent physical reality, but rather to be "a purely mental conception which could serve as the illustrative prefigurement of the theory of pneuma's motion through matter."[38]

After recording Chrysippus's teaching on *pneuma* moving itself, and what that means, Stobaeus reports among the Stoics a fourfold distinction of juxtaposition, mixture, blending, and fusion.[39] Juxtaposition (*parathesis*), like the Aristotelian term, "composition" (*synthesis*), is a heap of things combined—such as corn, barley, and figs or stones and sand. In juxtaposition, there is simply a contact of bodies at their surfaces.[40] Mixture (*mixis*) is a complete coextension (*antiparektasis di' holōn*) of bodies while their inherent qualities remain stable. Iron heated by fire, and the soul extending through the body exemplify *mixis*. As should be emphasized, the latter is still a case in their teaching that body extends through body. Blending (*krasis*) is a complete coextension (*antiparektasis di' holōn*) of moist bodies, in which the qualities remain stable, as the bodies can often be separated from one another by some device. With the example of the blending of wine and water, an oil-drenched sponge will soak up the water, but leave the wine.[41] Fusion (*synchysis*) is an alteration of bodies to create a new quality, differing from the previous qualities. Stobaeus gives perfumes and drugs as examples.[42]

[36] Gregory may have been familiar with Alexander. For example, Gregory in *Or*. 23.6 says that silence is assent. Martha Vinson notes how Gregory could have borrowed this idea from Alexander's *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, ed. M. Wallies (Berlin, 1898), vol. 2.3, p. 53.28: "Silence means yes." See Vinson, *Select Orations*, 135 n. 17. For an assessment of Alexander's popularity, especially as a philosopher in Athens, see Robert B. Todd, *Alexander of Aphrodisias, On Stoic Physics*, A Study of the De Mixtione with preliminary essays, text, translation, and commentary, *Philosophia Antiqua* 28 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 2–20. Alexander exercised a major influence on the Platonist commentators of Aristotle.

[37] Todd, *On Stoic Physics*, 65. One also wonders how the Stoics themselves could hold a uniform teaching on mixture, spanning over several centuries.

[38] Todd, *On Stoic Physics*, 72.

[39] See text and translation in Todd, *On Stoic Physics*, 52–54. The text is Stobaeus *Ecl*. I. xvii. 4. 153. 24–155.14 Wachsmuth (= Arius Didymus *Fr. Phys.* 28 = *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* II 471).

[40] Todd, *On Stoic Physics*, 52, sec. 2b.

[41] Todd, *On Stoic Physics*, 52–53, sec. 2c.

[42] Todd, *On Stoic Physics*, 53, sec. 2d.

A related account is given by Alexander of Aphrodisias, who reports that Chrysippus taught the following theory of blending. The whole of a substance is unified because *pneuma* totally pervades it. Yet, some of the mixtures in this substance occur by juxtaposition (*parathesis*). Chrysippus calls this juxtaposition "by juncture" (*kath harmēn*), preserving the surface and quality of the substances—as in beans and wheat in juxtaposition.[43] On the other end of the mixture spectrum, Alexander also reports of complete fusion (*synchysis di' holōn*).[44] In fusion, the substances and their qualities are destroyed, and some other body is produced, as happens with medical drugs. Besides these extremes, there exists the mixture (*mixis*) which is blending (*krasis*) in the proper sense of the term. This occurs when substances and their qualities are mutually extended and at the same time are preserved. Blending is thus a kind of mixture (as in Aristotle's *Topics*), and one in which the blended bodies preserve their own natures in the mixture.[45] Later in his treatise, Alexander reports various examples of Stoic blending.[46] Whereas, Aristotle thinks that a little wine in a vast quantity of water produces an increase in the water by domination, the Stoics teach that a cup of wine can be mixed with a great deal of water and is helped by the water for extension. Thus, for Aristotle, there is a sort of transformation so that the stronger overpowers the weaker, while for the Stoics, that which is little is preserved intact when it comes into contact with that which is greater. Applying this theory to the human, they think that the soul, which has its own substantiality, pervades the whole body and is mixed with it. Turning to yet more examples, we find that this mixture is like fire passing completely through iron, with both preserving their substances or, as Chrysippus thinks, that light is mixed with air.

For his own part, Alexander seeks at length to oppose the notion of body going through body, and to defend Aristotle from Stoic attack.[47] For example, at the end of his work, he refutes the Stoic idea that nourishment is an example of body going through body.[48] Rather, nourishment is by a process of alteration by the nutritive faculty like water being poured into wine where the power of wine makes wine of the water, preserving and increasing the wine. It is also like the activity of fire on something combustible. In this regard, Alexander seems to employ the Aristotelian theory of predominance.

Others give additional insights about the Stoic teaching. At times, this additional information does not always match the two main sources, which themselves are not identical. For example, Plutarch, who knew the works of Chrysippus, uses the term *synchysis* as synonymous with *krasis*.[49] Philo of

[43] *On mixture* 3, 216.14–216.22.
[44] *On mixture* 3, 216.22–216.25.
[45] *On mixture* 3, 216.25–217.2.
[46] *On mixture* 4, 217.13–218.10.
[47] *De mixtione* 218.10–238.20.
[48] *De mixtione* 233.14–238.20.
[49] Todd, *On Stoic Physics*, 69 n. 188 gives: *De comm. not.* 40. 1081A (Teubner, p. 110.27). Cf. 37. 1078A (Teubner, p. 104. 17) for *diachysis* as synonymous with *krasis*.

Alexandria takes up this very question of *synchysis* in a protracted discussion on mixture language.[50] In exploring the confusion (*synchysis*) of tongues from Gen. 11: 1–9, Philo asks about what things resemble confusion. To answer, he makes a threefold distinction that begins with the difference between *mixis*, which he says is the old term, and *krasis*. *Mixis* involves dry substances, while *krasis* deals with liquids.[51] For Philo, *mixis* is a juxtaposition (*parathesis*) of different bodies in no orderly fashion, such as a heap of grains. *Krasis*, on the other hand, is not a juxtaposition, but the complete mutual coextension (*antiparektasis di' holōn*) of dissimilar parts in interpenetration. Philo believes that their qualities can still be separated by some device. He uses the example of water and wine, saying that water can be absorbed by an oil-filled sponge while the wine is left behind. Philo explains that the sponge is kindred (*okeion*) to water, while the wine is a foreign substance and left behind. The final category is confusion (*synchysis*) involving the destruction of the original qualities to produce a new, distinct quality. He gives the example of a quadruple drug made from wax, tallow, pitch, and resin. Philo does not state that he draws upon Stoic philosophy, but his closer proximity in language to Chrysippus than to Aristotle seems clear.

In Plotinus and his student Porphyry, we encounter the Neoplatonic movement to apply and refine mixture language, especially in regards to the human being.[52] One treatise from the *Enneads* is devoted to the Stoic notion of *krasis di' holōn*, the Peripatetic rebuttal apparently from Alexander, a Stoic rejoinder, and Plotinus's own resolution.[53] For his own position, Plotinus ponders how one could deny that water runs through fleece, or can be exuded from papyrus. He then focuses, not on the water itself, but on the quality (*poiotēs*) of the water. According to Plotinus, qualities go through bodies without cutting them because qualities are incorporeal. Yet, he further finds that qualities of a certain kind do not blend, whereas, other qualities do blend. Plotinus then discusses corporeality, but does not, in this treatise, apply the question to the soul.

[50] Philo, *On the Confusion of Tongues*, 37.183–90. See text with translation in *Philo*, vol. 4, trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 110–13. Cf. Todd, *On Stoic Physics*, 50–51.

[51] This distinction that *mixis* is not simply a more general term of which *krasis* is proper to liquids, but that *mixis* is of dry things and *krasis* of liquids, has been accepted by some as the definitive Stoic position. For this division in antiquity, Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 409 gives Cyril, *Scholia* 8 (PG 75.1376 C). For this division in modernity without exact classical reference, see Grillmeier, "Die anthropologisch-christologische Sprache des Leontius von Byzanz und ihre Beziehung zu den Symmikta Zetemata des Neuplatonikers Porphyrius," 267.

[52] See Norris, *Manhood and Christ*, 70–73, and Grillmeier, "Die anthropologisch-christologische Sprache des Leontius von Byzanz und ihre Beziehung zu den Symmikta Zetemata des Neuplatonikers Porphyrius," 267–68.

[53] *Enneads* 2.7.

Elsewhere, Plotinus uses the Stoic example of light and air for the soul and body.[54] A very important difference from Stoicism is that Plotinus considers the soul to be immaterial. For Plotinus, light thoroughly penetrates the air, but is not mixed with air. Air is in the light, rather than light in the air. Air flows into the light and out into darkness, but the light remains stable. Plotinus finds this helpful to explain, following Plato, that the body is in the soul, rather than the soul in the body. A region of the soul contains the body, but there lies another region in which the body does not enter. Moreover, the body cannot affect certain powers of the soul, but it is the soul which illuminates the body for it to be alive.

Plotinus also uses the example of light when considering the living being as a mixture.[55] First, he considers that if the body and soul are mixed, the worse element (the body) would be improved by sharing in life, while the better element (the soul) would be degraded by sharing in death and unreason. But this is not exactly the case, although the body does receive life. Plotinus prefers the idea of "being interwoven" (*diaplakeisa*), a term found in the *Timaeus*, where Plato teaches that the soul of the universe is woven through its body.[56] Here in Plotinus, the light imagery reappears. If the body and the soul are interwoven, the soul, like light, can pass through the body without being touched by the body's affection.

Porphyry himself continues his master's teaching that the body does not contain the soul, but the soul contains the body. The soul is present to the body by relation, but its freedom from the body is seen in turning from the sensible to the intelligible. Nemesius of Emesa, a younger contemporary of Gregory of Nazianzus, quotes Porphyry's *Miscellaneous Investigations*.[57] Porphyry speaks of the soul's activity in the body, while the soul itself remains unmoved by the body, a principle with which Nemesius does not completely agree in regards to the soul, but will apply to the Word's activity in Christ's humanity. Porphyry says:

[54] *Enneads* 4.3.22.

[55] *Enneads* 1.1.4.

[56] *Enneads* 1.1.4; cf. *Timaeus* 36E.

[57] For a study of this in connection with Leontius of Byzantium, see Grillmeier, "Die anthropologisch-christologische Sprache des Leontius von Byzanz und ihre Beziehung zu den Symmikta Zetemata des Neuplatonikers Porphyrius." See also Brian E. Daley, S.J., "A Richer Union: Leontius of Byzantium and the Relationship of Human and Divine in Christ," *Studia Patristica* 24 (1992): 239–65, esp. pp. 254–56; and Brian E. Daley, S.J., "Nature and the 'Mode of Union': Late Patristic Models for the Personal Unity of Christ," in *The Incarnation: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Incarnation of the Son of God*, eds. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, S.J., Gerald O'Collins, S.J. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 164–96, esp. pp. 176–78. For Porphyry as a source for Nemesius, see *Nemesius On the Nature of Man*, trans. with an introduction and notes by R. W. Sharples and P. J. van der Eijk, Translated Texts for Historians 49 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 18–19.

> It is not to be denied that a certain substance can be received for the completion of another substance, and can be a part of [this] substance while retaining its own nature together with completing another substance, and while becoming one another, can retain its own unity and moreover, while itself untransmuted, it can transmute those things into which it comes so that they gain its activity by its presence.[58]

Nemesius himself, who deals with sundry theories in order to account for the union of the body and soul, provides a most valuable Christian philosophical account of mixture. After chapters on human nature and on the soul (which he considers unmixed), Nemesius discusses how the soul, incorporeal and substantial in itself, is united to the body as a living thing, "while keeping its own substance unconfused and free from destruction."[59] Nemesius rehearses the various options. The soul cannot merely lie alongside the body, like pebbles, as that would not account for the full animation of the body, and the soul and body could not together be called "one." Also, the body and soul cannot be like a mixture of wine and water, as that mixture destroys both together, for the resultant is neither pure water nor wine. Moreover, Nemesius thinks that such a wine–water mixture comes about by juxtaposition, escaping the eye, but can be seen when an oil-soaked sponge or papyrus takes up the pure water from the mixture. Nemesius then considers the position of Plato: that a living being does not consist of soul and body, but rather, a soul which uses the body and dons the body like a garment. This, for Nemesius, cannot account for the unity.[60] Rather, he turns to Ammonius, the teacher of Plotinus, who says that intelligible things can be unified with things capable of receiving them, without confusion and perishing, like things which are juxtaposed (*hōs ta parakeimena*). Although in the case of bodies, unification brings about alteration, intelligible things can unify without themselves being altered. Nemesius accepts this premise, and concludes that the soul is unified to the body, but not compounded with it. Nemesius also says that the soul and the body are affected together, showing them to be unified, for a living thing is affected as a whole and is one. But the soul retains its own unity and remains uncompounded, thus surviving after death. Nemesius gives the analogy of the sun transforming the air into light so that the light is unified with the air, mixing with the air, but without being compounded. One difference from the light and air analogy is that the whole soul is present in the body. The soul is said to be in relationship (*en schesei*) to the body by being present, "as God is

[58] Quoted in *On the Nature of Man* 3.43; trans. Sharples and van der Eijk, 85. For the influence of Alexander of Aphrodisias on Plotinus and Porphyry, see Todd, *On Stoic Physics*, 19–20.

[59] *On the Nature of Man*, 3.38; trans. Sharples and van der Eijk, 78–79.

[60] But Nemesius does consider the body to be the soul's instrument, following Plato (as in *On the Nature of Man* 2.25 and 5.54).

said to be in us."[61] Nemesius seems to think that this comment should make his position more easily understood!

Nemesius then applies this theory concerning intelligible things to be shown more clearly concerning the union of God the Word with the human (*pros ton anthropon*).[62] In that union, God remains uncompounded and uncontained, but not in the manner of the soul (*ton tēs psychēs tropon*) to the body—for the soul seems both to master the body and be mastered by it. Rather, God the Word does not share in the weakness of humanity, but instead, gives the body and soul a share in his divinity. God becomes thus one (*hen*) with the body and soul while remaining as he was before the union. Nemesius says, "This manner of blending or union (*τῆς κράσεως ἢ ἑνώσεως*) is more novel."[63]

Although Nemesius is the most explicit theologian to review the philosophical background of mixture language and to appropriate what is most suitable for him, others are similarly indebted to the debates. Apollinarius uses the familiar images of mixtures of wine and water and of iron heated by fire.[64] Gregory of Nyssa's image of a drop of vinegar in a boundless ocean also seems closely related to the previously discussed little wine and vast amount of water.[65] In modeling the Incarnation on the union of the soul with the body, Augustine uses the image of light remaining unchanged when combined with air.[66] This evidently hearkens back to something found in Nemesius and his Neoplatonic sources. But what about our Gregory?

As we will soon see, Gregory frequently gives mixture terms without the precision and images present in the Peripatetic–Stoic–Neoplatonic debates.

[61] *On the Nature of Man* 3.41; trans. Sharples and van der Eijk, 83.

[62] *On the Nature of Man* 3.42. For a focused study of how Nemesius applies his anthropology to his Christology, see M.-O. Boulnois, "L'Union de l'âme et du corps comme modèle christologique, de Némésius d'Émèse á la controverse nestorienne," in *Les Pères de l'Église face à la science médicale de leur temps*, eds. Véronique Boudon-Millot and Bernard Pouderon (Paris: Duschesne, 2005), 451–75. One question that surfaces is how Nemesius distinguishes between God's presence "in us," and God's presence in the Incarnation. Nemesius seems to move from God's general presence in humanity, to God the Word's unique presence to Christ's humanity, but the contrast could certainly be made more clearly. See *On the Nature of Man* 3.41–42.

[63] This belies the error of Bouchet's statement that Nemesius refuses to speak of those two terms in anthropology and Christology. See Jean-René Bouchet, O.P., "Le Vocabulaire de l'union et du rapport des natures chez saint Grégoire de Nysse," *Revue Thomiste* 68 (1968): 533–82, at p. 562.

[64] E.g., frags. 127 and 128 (Lietzmann, 238.14–24, 26–30).

[65] E.g., Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, 5.5. For studies, see Bouchet, "Le Vocabulaire de l'union et du rapport des natures chez saint Grégoire de Nysse," Brian E. Daley, S.J., "Divine Transcendence and Human Transformation: Gregory of Nyssa's Anti-Apollinarian Christology," *Modern Theology* 18 (2002): 497–506, and Sarah Coakley, "'Mingling' in Gregory of Nyssa's Christology: A Reconsideration."

[66] E.g., *Ep*. 137, to Volusianus, 3.11. Here Augustine notes the problem of materiality in mixture language and tries to avoid it. For examples of mixture language from the *DeTrinitate*, see *Trin*. 4.13.16; 4.20.13; and 13.1.2.

The most detailed description of what Gregory means and does not mean by the mixture of the Incarnation is in *Ep.* 101, which is examined in Chapter 4. Before that examination, we will consider, first, some of Gregory's numerous references concerning his own mixture and then the mixture of Christ. In his autobiographical Christology's blend of Christ and himself, Gregory understands his human life as a first mixture and Christ's life as a second mixture for the salvation of the human race.

THE MIXTURE OF GREGORY'S HUMAN LIFE

For Gregory, mixture language appears in various ways besides that of describing his human constitution and the Incarnation. God, who mixes the world, is utterly pure and unmixed.[67] On the other hand, the whole world can be thought of as a mixture in some sense—as he knows, for example, that one does not see a colorless body or a disembodied color.[68] Gregory speaks of the *mixeis* and *kraseis* of elements in the world, without noting if the two terms express the same or different meanings.[69] This mixture principle could also relate to the various tensions of life, as Gregory loves to emphasize the contrasts in mixtures. For an example from his model for ministry, Gregory mentions the Apostle Paul's loving kindness (*philanthrōpia*), strictness (*austēron*), and the mixture (*mixis*) and blending (*krasis*) of both.[70] This paradox of two contrasts suggests how Gregory blends in his life many overarching oppositions, such as Greek classical literature rife with paganism and the Christian faith, philosophy and rhetoric, or contemplation and action. Gregory's mixtures of opposites point to the Greek mind's penchant to hold polarities together and to the Christian faith's paradoxical mysteries.[71] From this background of how Greeks give voice to their thinking, the properly Gregorian accent must be heard. Gregory is ceaselessly fascinated by mixtures—and

[67] For example, see Gregory's acknowledgment that he is composite and God is wholly incomposite in *Carm.* 1.1.2.15–16.

[68] *Carm.* 1.1.4.

[69] *Or.* 6.15.

[70] *Or.* 2.54 (SC 247.162). Here, it seems that the two terms must be simply a rhetorical play on things identical or nearly so. For other examples of *krasis* following *mixis* as a synonym or subset, see *Or.* 6.2 and 38.13.

[71] Harrison, *Festal Orations*, 36 n. 32 points to the studies of G. R. Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy: Two Types of Argumentation in Greek Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 15–171 and Richard Garner, *Law and Society in Classical Athens* (New York: St. Martin's, 1987), 75–83. For a study of paradox in Christian rhetoric, with reference to Gregory, see Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse*, Sather Classical Lectures 55 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 155–88.

attends closely to the blend that composes every human life, especially his own. He frequently draws attention to what is, or should be, the stronger influencing the weaker. The soul and the body are not equal in Gregory's anthropology—and so how much more unequal are the divinity and the humanity in his Christology.

Gregory's view of the creation of the human mixture appears in several places, but perhaps none more famously than his oration *On the Theophany*.[72] There he gives a catechetical review of the whole of Christian faith from the perspective of who God is and what God created. God (who is like an endless, boundless ocean of being) wanted to pour out his goodness so that there might be beings to receive the benefits of contemplating his goodness. He first fashioned immaterial, intelligent spirits. Afterwards he created a visible and material world. Gregory believes that the spiritual creation is kindred (*oikeion*) to God, but that the physical creation is absolutely foreign (*xenon pantapasin*) to divinity.[73] All these things stayed within their boundaries and gave silent praise to the Word who fashioned them. Gregory preaches, "There was not yet a mingling (κρᾶμα) of both realms, nor any mixture (μίξις) of these opposites—that mark of a still greater wisdom and generosity concerning created natures—nor was the full richness of his goodness yet evident."[74] The creative Word then crafted the human as one living being from both (*zōon hen ex amphoterōn*).[75]

As a mixed worshipper (*proskynētēn mikton*), the human being has the destiny of being divinized by the inclination toward God. Gregory concludes this chapter of the oration by explaining creation's goal of divinization: "For that, I believe, is where the modest splendor of truth, in this life, is leading us: to see and experience the brilliance of God, a glory befitting the one who has bound us together, will dissolve us, and will again bind us together in a still more lofty way."[76] This language of binding continues to express Gregory's idea of mixture, but in terms other than *mixis* and *krasis*. Here, Gregory emphasizes the deification in this life that leads to resurrection after death.

The instability expressed in the mixture's dissolution is examined at greater length in the next chapter where sin enters, due to humanity's weakness. The Tree of Knowledge in Paradise represents contemplation, but that ought to be

[72] McGuckin writes, "So much of Gregory's work turns on the idea of the mixed creation of mankind that it occupies the position of a ground-bass to all his thinking." See John A. McGuckin, "The Vision of God in St. Gregory Nazianzen," *Studia Patristica* 32 (1997): 145–52, at p. 150; cf. Gilbert, "Person and Nature," 455; Ellverson, *The Dual Nature of Man*, 12; and Daniel A. Sykes, "Gregory Nazianzen, Poet of the Moral Life," *Studia Patristica* 22 (1989): 69–73, at p. 72.

[73] Cf. *Or*. 38.10 (SC 358.122–24).

[74] *Or*. 38.11 (SC 358.124); trans. Daley, 122. The passage reappears in *Or*. 45.7.

[75] Cf. Ellverson, *The Dual Nature of Man*, 80. A similar expression of the human being's unity in God's creation of mingling dust with spirit can be found in *Or*. 2.75.

[76] *Or*. 38.11 (SC 358.126); trans. Daley, 122.

approached only by those who have been perfected in an orderly way.[77] This did not occur for Adam and Eve. The devil overcame, first, the woman, and, then, she persuaded Adam, who forgot the command given by God. Adam and Eve are then dressed in tunics of skin—which Gregory interprets to mean perhaps thick, mortal flesh. Considering the various assistances offered humanity, Gregory says that stronger medicine was needed: the Word himself.[78]

Gregory also considers the double aspect of his human life in other orations. For example, in *On the Love of the Poor*, Gregory reflects on how he is connected to his body—a mystery which he does not understand. He is an image of God and still mingled with filthy clay.[79] He emphasizes again how his very constitution is a deep mystery.[80] We humans are the greatest and lowliest of all creatures because we have within ourselves such opposites as heaven and earth. He then summarizes that such is our blend (*to krama*).[81]

Gregory's anthropology of mixture pervades his thought in poems concerning awareness of his own existence's mystery. Gregory begins his poem, "On the Soul," describing it as God's breath that has undergone a mixture of the heavenly and earthly.[82] Later in the poem, Gregory repeats the mixture language to speak of the creation of the original human by him who established *my* form.[83] He continues the language in discussing the continual procreation of human beings, as bodies derive from flesh, but the soul is mixed in imperceptibly.[84]

Similarly, near the end of a moral poem, "On the cheapness of the outer human," Gregory contrasts the dream-like state of human hopes with his own experience:

> But I who have clung to Christ will never let go,
> Even when loosed from this earthly life's chains.
> For, in truth, I am two-fold (διπλόος): the body was formed down here,
> And, again, it therefore nods down towards its own ground.
> But the soul is a breath of God, and always yearns exceedingly
> For a greater share of the things of heaven above.[85]

[77] *Or.* 38.12. [78] *Or.* 38.13. [79] *Or.* 14.6. [80] *Or.* 14.7.

[81] *Or.* 14.7 (PG 35.865C); cf. *Or.* 28.22. Gregory uses his experience of the weakness of his own flesh to motivate him to care for the weakness of the flesh of others—thus, preaching compassion for the destitute and the sick. He notes that all are one in the Lord, and there is one head of all: Christ. See *Or.* 14.8.

[82] *Carm.* 1.1.7.1–2 (Sykes and Moreschini, 32). Gilbert, "Person and Nature," 455, acknowledges that Gregory refers to created nature as a *mixis* in several places in the *Poemata Arcana*, mentioning *Carm.* 1.1.4.11f., 91f., and 1.1.5.27f.

[83] *Carm.* 1.1.7.71 (Sykes and Moreschini, 36); cf. *Carm.* 1.2.1.92–97. Commenting on lines 70–75 of *Carm.* 1.1.7, Børtnes finds that Gregory blends *Iliad* 16.704 with the Genesis accounts of creation for the language of himself as the mortal image of the Immortal. Bortnes comments, "Gregory sees his own self as the mortal image of the Son." See Jostein Børtnes, "*Eikôn Theou*: Meanings of Likeness in Gregory of Nazianzus," *Studia Patristica* 41 (2006): 287–91.

[84] *Carm.* 1.1.7.79 (Sykes and Moreschini, 38).

[85] *Carm.* 1.2.15.147–52; trans. Gilbert, 143–44.

Gregory uses the word *diploos* to express the two tendencies that he feels: his body pulls him to the earth but his spirit buoys him up to heaven. It is the latter which is stronger in his life, but that is not necessarily so in every human life.

The duality of mixture thus points to the moral crisis on earth: a judgment must be made between heaven and earth. The more one is mixed with materiality, the less one attains to heaven's purity. The ascetic life, particularly in virginity, is less mixed with the world and more mixed with divinity.[86] Sin is the neglect of what is higher in the double aspect of human life, and at times, Gregory uses the expression of duplicity for certain examples of a good appearance that covers a sinful falsity. For example, Gregory considers the devil to be double in form, for the deceiver who is wrapped in darkness may appear as an angel of light.[87] Gregory also describes a wicked pastor as double, for he resembles a wolf in sheepskin or a baited hook for fish.[88] Gregory hears an opponent accuse him of being twofold: one kind of person to his friends, and another to outsiders.[89] Gregory also accuses the pseudo-philosopher Maximus of being double in nature and shape: a man who appears with womanly features.[90] To be double as duplicitous, or simply too enmeshed in worldly concerns, leads one away from attaining purity by being mixed more and more with God. The goal of this life is to attain to that divine purity.

How does the resurrection affect the dual character of the human mixture? Gregory discusses this in the funeral oration on his brother Caesarius.[91] When a pure soul is released from the world and the darkening element has been purged, it goes joyfully to the Lord and possesses blessedness. At the bodily resurrection, the soul takes its own related flesh, with which it was united while on earth. The soul shares its joys with the body, "having assumed it wholly into itself, and having become with it, one and spirit and mind and God, life having absorbed the mortal and transitory element."[92] This remarkably strong language describing the body's absorption into oneness with the soul will be echoed in his Christology, when he alludes to divinity's absorption of humanity in Christ's oneness. Indeed, Gregory turns from this oration's teaching about human nature in general, and quotes Psalm 8, which, in the Letter to the Hebrews, is applied to Christ: "What is the human being, that you should remember him?"[93] But Gregory applies it to himself and asks, "What is this new mystery concerning me?"[94] Gregory's autobiographical voice resounds. This mystery is his present mixed nature: small and great, lowly and exalted, mortal and immortal, earthly and heavenly. Gregory says that he is

[86] E.g., *Carm.* 1.2.1.409–11. [87] *Carm.* 2.1.45.333.
[88] *Carm.* 1.2.13.162. [89] *De vita sua* 719. [90] *De vita sua* 766.
[91] Cf. Ellverson, *The Dual Nature of Man*, 32–33.
[92] *Or.* 7.21 (SC 405.234); trans. McCauley, 22 (alt.). McCauley writes, "having become with it one spirit and mind and good." Was "good" simply a typographical error in translating *theos* as "god"?
[93] Ps. 8: 5; Heb. 2: 6. [94] *Or.* 7.23; trans. McCauley, 24.

connected with the world and with God; he is connected with the flesh and with the spirit. He then gives the solution: "I must be buried with Christ, rise with Christ, be joint heir with Christ, become the Son of God, even be called 'God' himself."[95] The goal of his earthly life lies beyond. Gregory continues, "This is the meaning of the great mystery for us. This is the intent of God who, for our sake, was made human and became poor, in order to raise our flesh and restore his image and remake the human, that we might all become one in Christ, who perfectly became, in all of us, all that he is himself."[96] Such is the necessary Christological answer to the mystery of his own mingling, the answer to which we will soon explore in depth.

In the examples we have seen of human life as a mixture, it has not been the case that there is a static juxtaposition of the spiritual and the material without some transformation. Also, a *tertium quid* has not been produced from the mixture of the two. The human being is a mystery of both corporeality and incorporeality simultaneously. But the very course of human life is the process whereby one moves more and more to the spiritual or to the material. Life on earth is an unstable mystery in much need of God's further help after sin infected creation. Only in the resurrection will the divinization be complete, when Gregory will experience true oneness with God, and it is Christ's mixture which provides the necessary remedy.

CHRIST AS THE "NEW MIXTURE" FOR GREGORY'S SALVATION

Having looked at Gregory's mixture as human, we can now see the significance of Gregory calling Christ the "New Mixture" and "Second Mixture." The Word enters human life, which Gregory knows as his own, and partakes fully in this life while still remaining the Word. Gregory expresses in many ways how Christ "humbled himself so far as to share in our mixture."[97] For example, in an elegy, "On human nature," Gregory tells his reader of how, on the previous day, he rested in a shady grove and enjoyed talking to his own soul while the breezes were blowing, the birds were singing, the locusts were making the whole woods resound, and a stream was flowing. Amidst such natural delights, he thought of his own sorrows, and questioned who he was, who he is, and what he will be.[98] Twice he speaks of himself explicitly in

[95] *Or.* 7.23 (SC 405.240); trans. McCauley, 24 (alt.); cf. Rom. 6: 4, 8: 14–18; Col. 2: 12–13.
[96] *Or.* 7.23 (SC 405.240); trans. McCauley, 24 (alt.); cf. 2 Cor. 8: 9.
[97] *Or.* 14.15 (PG 35.876B); trans. Daley, 83 (alt.).
[98] Gregory commonly asks standard philosophical questions about the past, present, and future of his life; e.g., the first lines of *Carm.* 1.2.15 and 1.2.16.

mixture language; yet, the whole poem expresses the uneasy mixture that is his life.[99] From this stance, Gregory, in just a few lines, reviews the course of salvation history culminating in "Christ, blending his own form with ours, so that the suffering God might give me a defense against my passions, and perfect me as God by his human shape."[100]

Gregory likewise speaks of both his own mixture and Christ's in a poem on virginity. Christ's Incarnation is described as God "having gathered two natures into one thing" (*φύσεις δύο εἰς ἓν ἀγείρας*).[101] Gregory says that, in the Virgin's womb, "God was mingled with things human (*μίγη Θεὸς ἀνδρομέοισιν*). He is one God out of both, since mixed with Godhead (*θεότητι κερασθεὶς*), a mortal exists as Lord and Christ from [his] Godhead."[102] Interestingly, the noun following "one" here is God. God deifies humanity so that, in Christ, there is one God. Gregory then continues to call this the second mixture, on account of the first's condemnation. Gregory speaks of himself in terms both of creation's first mixture, and of the new creation's second mixture: "First I received a share in the divine breath, then later Christ took on both my soul and all my members."[103] In this autobiographical Christology, Gregory is thus an Adamic figure, created by Christ and re-created by him in the Incarnation.[104] In several different ways, Gregory represents all of humanity, both by nature and by redemption. For example, in a poem on his silence in Lent, Gregory reverses the order from the first to the second creation, and goes from celebrating how Christ blends the human form with the heavenly, to celebrating in the very next line "my mixture" (*mixin emēn*), another ineffable mystery.[105]

In *Or*. 39.13, Gregory speaks of how God wanted creatures on earth to worship him, but they fell into sin. God did not ignore them. Gregory asks about the great mystery concerning us, whereby natures are renewed, and God becomes human. On account of God's love for the human race, the Incarnation occurred so that the incomprehensible one might be comprehended. Gregory continues:

[99] *Carm*. 1.2.14.66–67 and 81–82.

[100] *Carm*. 1.2.14.90–92 (PG 37.762); trans. Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 135 (alt.).

[101] *Carm*. 1.2.1.149 (PG 37.533); trans. Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 94 (alt.). It can be emphasized that grammatically "one" cannot refer to nature, as *physeis* is feminine and Gregory used the neuter form of "one."

[102] *Carm*. 1.2.1.152–54 (PG 37.534); trans. Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 94 (alt.). Gilbert's translation of "because of the Godhead" in line 153 neglects the repeated blending emphasis in *kerastheis*.

[103] *Carm*. 1.2.1.156–57 (PG 37.534); trans. Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 94.

[104] For a "Threnody to Christ," in which Gregory as an Adamic figure prays to "my Christ" so that the flaming sword guarding paradise may be extinguished and he be allowed to return to Christ, see *Carm*. 1.2.63.

[105] *Carm*. 2.1.34.83–84.

> For this reason, what could not be mixed has been mixed: not simply God and change, not simply mind and flesh, not simply the timeless one and time, not simply the uncircumscribed and measured limit, but also birth and virginity, dishonor with the one who is higher than all honor, impassible being with suffering, immortal substance with decay.[106]

This passage shows how the Incarnation mingles together many things otherwise impossible to unite. The purpose of this mixture occurs to conquer the Evil One, and free the human race from death. Gregory shows that the devil, who deceived us with the hope of being divine, is himself deceived by encountering God when attacking Adam.[107]

Gregory expresses this mystery of mingling in even more personal terms in *Or*. 34.10. There, after differentiating what is common and distinctive among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, he speaks of the exchange between the Son and humanity, or rather the Son and Gregory himself, in the Incarnation. Things concerning the flesh are said about the Son "on account of me, a human, and my salvation—so that by receiving what is mine he may impart what is his through the new commingling (διὰ τῆς καινῆς ἀνακράσεως)."[108] This newness recalls the prior blending of God's creation of the human. Moreover, this word for commingling (*anakrasis*) is used in the *Philocalia of Origen* where Origen equates it with union (*henōsis*), and suggests that both terms are stronger than a mere partnership (*koinōnia*).[109] Gregory uses that noun in only one other place.[110] In *Or*. 10, he suggests that his friendship with Basil is a commingling beyond that of brothers (*tēs hyper adelphous anakraseōs*).[111]

In a poem on the Incarnation, Gregory confronts two opponents: the one who divides the Word from the Father in inequality, and the one who divides our humanity from the Word. As for the latter, Gregory explores the meaning of the Incarnation through repeated mixture language and with direct reference to himself. He writes:

> He was God, but the Father's Word was made our human being,
> So that he might mix our being with God, being mixed among earthlings.
> He is one God out of both, being so human as to make me

[106] *Or*. 39.13 (SC 358.178); trans. Daley, 134.

[107] *Or*. 39.13. Cf. John P. Egan, "The Deceit of the Devil According to Gregory Nazianzen," *Studia Patristica* 22 (1989): 8–13.

[108] *Or*. 34.10 (SC 318.216); trans. Browne and Swallow, 337.

[109] *Philocalia of Origen* 19.4. For a study of Origen's application of *anakrasis* to Christ against the background of Gnostic uses of mixture language to describe the soul's salvation, see Annewies van den Hoek, "Origen's Role in Formulating Later Christological Language: The Case of ἀνάκρασις," in *Origeniana Septima. Origenes in den Auseinandersetzungen des 4. Jahrhunderts*, eds. W. A. Bienert and U. Kühneweg (Leuven: University Press, 1999), 39–50.

[110] Cf. a verbal form, such as in *Or*. 29.19, considered below.

[111] *Or*. 10.2 (SC 405.320).

God, instead of human. Be merciful, O wounded one on high!
Let that much suffice you. What more have I to do with an ineffable mind and mixture?
Both are God, you mortals, be content with reason's limits.[112]

By the Word taking up humanity so completely, that both divinity and humanity in Christ are God, Gregory himself becomes God, instead of human (*anti brotoio*). Does this mean that Gregory thinks he ceased being human? No, not strictly speaking. But the force of his language here about divinization follows from the way he evokes Christ's Incarnation. Elsewhere, Gregory says that he becomes God to the same extent that God becomes human.[113] On one side, the Incarnation appears as the first divinization, but a complete one that has no exact parallel with a prophet or saint, as Gregory elsewhere qualifies.[114] On the other side, Gregory's humanity is taken up to become God by the intermingling that took place in Christ.[115] Beyond these key principles, Gregory does not want to press. His poetics allow him to celebrate the mystery without committing himself to precise definitions.

Looking again at a quotation given earlier in this chapter, we find that Gregory uses images to help his audience understand this process. The images used here are quite different from dried beans and peas mixed together. Rather, he says that the Word: "may consume within himself the meaner element, as fire consumes wax, or the sun ground-mist, so that I may share in what is his on account of the intermingling (*διὰ τὴν σύγκρασιν*)."[116] Fire melting wax and sunlight drying mist are biblical allusions, not Stoic mixture images, which suggest the notion of predominance.[117] God's prevailing over humanity in the Incarnation is for the sake of God's prevailing over sinful humanity in Gregory's divinization. By the Incarnation, the Word bears all of Gregory's life and everything that is his by becoming a human so that, by divinization, Gregory may share in what is the Word's through this mixture. Yet, one should not say that simply no human nature exists any longer after the Incarnation (or after divinization)—as the Aristotelian notion of predominance might lead one to assume.

Indeed, Gregory knows that heresies have developed because of distorting the Incarnation as a mixture. In the fourth *Theological Oration*, he says, "What leads heretics astray is the coupling together of titles, titles which, because of

[112] *Carm*. 1.1.11.7–12 (PG 37.471); Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 84 (alt.). Gilbert seems to have read *mikros* rather than *miktos* in line 8, as he says "little amongst earthlings."
[113] *Or*. 29.19.
[114] E.g., *De vita sua* 642–45 and *Ep*. 101.5(22).
[115] *Or*. 30.3.
[116] *Or*. 30.6 (SC 250.236); trans. Williams and Wickham, 97 (alt.).
[117] Cf. Ps. 67: 3 (LXX) and Sir. 43: 4 (LXX).

the intermingling, overlap."[118] When the natures are distinguished, the titles are likewise differentiated. Gregory says that both together are one (*to synamphoteron hen*) by combination, not by nature. Gregory thus implies again that the term "nature" (*physis*) does not adequately describe how divinity and humanity are united in mixture. Such an approach is quite different from Apollinarius, who speaks of Christ's "one nature" after the commingling.[119] Moreover, a vital aspect of this blending for Gregory's salvation, which the Arians and Apollinarians have alike gotten wrong, is the rational soul's role in the mixture of Word and flesh.

THE HUMAN MIND'S MEDIATION IN THE INCARNATION

Gregory repeatedly emphasizes something in his mixture language affirmed by Origen. In his *On First Principles*, Origen states the necessity of Christ's human soul to be mediating for God to mingle with the body.[120] This position contrasts starkly with that of Gregory's contemporary Apollinarius, who uses mixture language, but denies a human mind in Christ. Gregory deepens Origen's insight about Christ's human mind as the necessary locus of mediation in the blending of divinity with the flesh. The mediation of the mind in the Incarnation shows the divine intimacy with humanity in its highest part, the part most resembling God, yet most needing purification in sinners (like Gregory) in order for salvation of the whole human to occur. Gregory's vision counters both those who want to remove the human mind in the Word's Incarnation, and those who regard divinity and humanity as two subjects in Christ.[121] Moreover, this Gregorian emphasis is not simply a common Cappadocian strategy against opponents. Gregory of Nyssa never makes the rational soul a mediating element in the Incarnation.[122]

[118] *Or*. 30.8 (SC 250.240–42); trans. Williams and Wickham, 99. Cf. the ninth anathema of *Ep*. 101, treated in Chap. 5. Although praising Gregory's Christology, Fulford writes, "Less felicitous are those cases where Gregory appears to distinguish what pertains to Christ's divine and human natures respectively, against the grain of his Christology." Fulford cites *Or*. 30.8 as his example. See Ben Fulford, "Gregory of Nazianzus and Biblical Interpretation," in *Re-reading Gregory of Nazianzus*, ed. Christopher A. Beeley, 31–48, at p. 40.

[119] *E.g*., Apollinarius of Laodicea, *De unione* 5.

[120] Origen, *On First Principles*, 2.6.3.

[121] Cf. Kenneth Paul Wesche, "Union of God and Man in Jesus Christ in the Thought of Gregory of Nazianzus," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 28 (1984): 83–98, esp. pp. 87–88.

[122] Bouchet, "Le Vocabulaire de l'union et du rapport des natures chez saint Grégoire de Nysse," 563. Bouchet speaks of Gregory of Nyssa's position as showing an advantage over Nemesius and Gregory of Nazianzus, by having the divine nature in direct contact with each element of human nature, avoiding the union of the Word and of the flesh *mediante anima*. This difference between the Gregories on this has not been sufficiently appreciated. For example, see Wesche, "'Mind' and 'Self' in the Christology of Saint Gregory the Theologian," 54–55.

In *Or*. 38, *On the Theophany*, after Gregory describes the making of the human as a blend, he also speaks of the Incarnation of the Word in mixture language. Gregory emphasizes who the Word of God is (such as beyond comprehension and the Father's definition) and says that he came to his own image "and bore flesh for the sake of flesh, and mingled with a rational soul for my soul's sake, wholly cleansing like by like."[123] Gregory continues that the Word became human in every respect except sin, being conceived by the Virgin, "coming forth as God, along with what he had taken on; one from two opposites, flesh and Spirit—the one of which shared divinity, the other of which was divinized."[124] Gregory then sings a paean of praise for this wondrous mixture, with his distinctive notes of mixture, the rational soul, and his own salvation:

> O new mixture! O unexpected blending! (Ὢ *τῆς καινῆς μίξεως, ὦ τῆς παραδόξου κράσεως*) He who is has come to be, the uncreated one is created, the limitless one is contained, through the mediation of a rational soul standing between divinity and the coarseness of flesh. He who is rich is a beggar—for he goes begging in my flesh, that I might become rich with his godhead! He who is full has emptied himself—for he emptied himself of his own glory for a while, that I might have a share in his fullness. How rich is his goodness? What is this Mystery all around me? I had a share in the image, and I did not preserve it; he took on a share in my flesh, so that he might both save the image and make the flesh immortal.[125]

This bears some resemblance to Apollinarian formulations, and particularly the exclamation, "O new creation and divine mixture! God and flesh completed one and the same nature!"[126] Yet, the dissimilarity in the content of *Or*. 38 must be more strenuously underlined, beyond Gregory's avoidance of speaking of "one and the same nature." For Gregory, the Incarnation occurs, not only through Christ's human mind, but it occurs in a complete identification of the Son of God with "me." Christ cleanses like by like. For Apollinarius, Christ saves because he is *not* like each one of us, a human being with a rational soul.[127] For Gregory, Christ saves because he has come to live in

[123] *Or*. 38.13 (SC 358.132); trans. Daley, 123.

[124] *Or*. 38.13 (SC 358.132–34); trans. Daley, 123.

[125] *Or*. 38.13 (SC 358.134); trans. Daley, 123–24; cf. Exod. 3: 14; Rom. 10: 12; 2 Cor. 8: 9; Col. 2: 9; Phi. 2: 7; Gen. 1: 26–27. This important passage reappears, as do several others, in the *Second Oration on Pascha*; see *Or*. 45.9. Gregory, in various places, is insistent that the Son's emptying in the Incarnation does not mean that he became less than the Father in his divinity. For example, he quips, "For he didn't shave off any bit of Godhead, and still he saved me." See *Carm*. 1.1.2 (PG 37.406); trans. Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 41.

[126] Frag. 10 (Lietzmann, 207.12–13), trans. in Richard A. Norris, Jr., *The Christological Controversy*, Sources of Early Christian Thought (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 108.

[127] Beeley notes that, for Apollinarius, Jesus is "very different from us: he is not in fact a complete human being, possessing a human mind, soul, and body (Frag. 9., 42), but he merely came 'in human likeness,' as Paul writes (Phil 2:7)." See Christopher A. Beeley, *The Unity of Christ: Continuity and Conflict in Patristic Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 178. See also the discussion of *Ep*. 101 in Chap. 4.

complete solidarity with Gregory's life—and principally with his mind. This autobiographical Christology is well positioned to refute Apollinarius's projection of a Christ quite distant from the workings of a rational soul. Gregory expresses in ecstatic language the wonder of the Incarnation's new mixing, a mystery "all around me."

Gregory's attention to Christ's rational soul does not appear merely as a late polemic from the time after Gregory returned to Cappadocia following his episcopal service in Constantinople. In *Or*. 2.23, an oration, at least in its original form, dated to 362, he speaks of the wonder of the Incarnation as "the new mixture: God and the human; one from the two and both through one." Gregory continues, "On account of this, God was blended (ἀνεκράθη) through the medium of the soul, and things which had been set apart were knit together by the affinity to each of that mediating."[128] Gregory then describes how the Incarnation causes a perfect match for our salvation: "And all became one for the sake of all and for the sake of the one progenitor: the soul because of the disobedient soul, the flesh because of that flesh which cooperated with the soul and shared in its condemnation, Christ (who was better than sin and beyond its reach) because of Adam, who had become subject to sin."[129]

Moreover, Gregory speaks of the mystery of the mind's mediation in personal terms in the capital city when countering the Eunomians, who also have no place for a rational soul in Christ. *Or*. 29.19 presents this mixing through the mind's mediation with Gregory's characteristically self-referential touch: "Through the medium of the mind, he had dealings with the flesh, being made a human: the God on earth. Since that was blended with God (συνανεκράθη Θεῷ), one was born—the stronger side predominating, in order that I might be made God to the same extent that he was made man."[130] Here, we again see Gregory's use of predominance. The stronger side wins in the Incarnation, but its primary effect comes in the victory of Gregory himself. The result is not only "the God on earth," but also Gregory becoming divine.

As already noted, Gregory's most influential argument on the mind's mediation against Apollinarius appears in *Ep*. 101, which will be examined in detail below. Yet, its teaching appears succinctly in his poem "Against Apollinarius," Gregory writes:

> For since God cannot be mixed with flesh,
> His soul and mind were intermediary as it were:
> His soul as the spouse of the flesh; his mind as God's own image.

[128] Susanna Elm has this passage in mind in the following comment: "Christ incarnate was the supreme *paradoxon*, signifying salvation, by mixing ontologically distinct, even contradictory essences, divine and human, heaven and earth, God and man." See Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 421.

[129] *Or*. 2.23 (SC 247.120). The translation of Browne and Swallow, 209–10 avoids the mixture terms and adds the term of "natures."

[130] *Or*. 29.19 (SC 250.218); trans. Williams and Wickham, 86 (alt.).

> Thus the nature of God was mixed with its kin,
> And from that point had communion with the flesh;
> Thus both divinizing and divinized were one God.[131]

Through Christ's mind, which is the highest part of the soul, God reaches down even to Gregory's flesh, participating in what is "mine," says Gregory, except sin's passions.[132]

MULTIPLICITY AND UNITY

One danger for interpreters might be that the terms *mixis* and *krasis* become, themselves, a sort of terminological ossification not fitting so easily in the reality of Gregory's supple treatment.[133] We have already noticed that Gregory uses more mixture terms than simply *mixis* and *krasis*. I now explore two additional words, *syntheton* and *plekō*, in Gregory's mixture language, before taking up the question of the meaning of "one." By undertaking this research of terminological breadth, we will discover how Gregory draws his autobiographical Christology to unify all in Christ.

As noted above, Aristotle writes in his *On Generation and Corruption* about a *synthesis*, the weakest of all mixtures, and not truly a *mixis* or *krasis*. Among the mixture terms at Gregory's disposal is the word *syntheton*, reminiscent of Aristotle's vocabulary and commonly translated into English through the Latin as "composite."[134] The synonymy between the two words can be seen where Gregory says that a *synthesis* should not even be imagined in God's incomposite nature (*tēs asynthetou physeōs*).[135]

Gregory uses the term, both for the mystery of humanity and the mystery of the Incarnation. In one of his many arguments appealing to common sense, he thinks that no one would deny that the human is a composite.[136] This statement, of course, goes against those philosophical approaches (such as Plato's) which consider the human to be the soul, and not truly a composite of soul and body. Gregory also uses the term in different places to speak of the

[131] *Carm*. 1.1.10.56–61; trans. Musurillo in Winslow, 84–85 (alt.). For a quite different rendering of the understanding of the flesh in the poem, see Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 83.

[132] *Carm*. 1.1.10.63–64.

[133] Sarah Coakley's important brief study of "mingling" in Gregory of Nyssa cautions against this ossification: "his [Gregory of Nyssa's] theory of 'mingling' seems to me remarkably rich and strange." See Coakley, "'Mingling' in Gregory of Nyssa's Christology: A Reconsideration," 80.

[134] See the treatment above on Aristotle. Also, for Origen's use of various forms of *synthesis* to describe the Incarnation in the *Contra Celsus* I, 60; I, 66; II, 9; and II, 16, see Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 395–96. Wolfson argues that all this language should be taken in the sense of "predominance."

[135] *Or*. 31.32 (SC 250.338). Cf. *Or*. 29.10.

[136] *Or*. 31.23.

Incarnation in defensive terms against three categories of opponents. Against the Eunomians, Gregory articulates his partitive exegesis where the loftier things of Scripture concerning the Son should be applied to the Godhead, while the humble things to the composite (*tōi synthetōi*), to the one who was humbled and took flesh for the sake of Gregory's opponent.[137] In the *De vita sua*, Gregory fears that those holding two Sons would dismiss the composite state of God (*to syntheton tou theou*), for their division within Christ would remove God from suffering the things experienced by the flesh.[138] In Christ, the nature of a human participates in the whole God; Christ is, therefore, unlike a prophet or some other who participates in the things of God, but not God.[139] Gregory says that they must worship Christ "as one Human-God, the assuming together with the assumed, the timeless and that commingled with time."[140] Similarly, Gregory uses the same expression of *syntheton tou theou* when attacking the Apollinarians in a dogmatic poem. He accuses them of cutting the composite reality of God by giving him some things of "mine," but not other things—mixing in flesh, but removing the mind.[141] Gregory gives here one of his characteristic jabs against his opponents. Were they afraid that Christ's skin would break if he had a human mind?

Another mixture term is the verb *plekō*, which has within its semantic field "to plait, weave, braid." We saw above that Plotinus, to speak of the human being, borrows a form of this word from Plato's understanding of the world. For his own part, Gregory says in a dogmatic poem that he is a soul and a body, a nature woven (*plektē physis*) from both light and murkiness.[142] In a moral poem, he turns from the world to describe his own creation: "But I myself was also fastened together by the hand of Christ, woven from both things (πλεκτὸς ἀπ' ἀμφοτέρων): the heavenly and the earthly."[143] In similar terms to these references to the human, Gregory can speak of the Incarnation in one of the *Theological Orations*: "What is greater for human lowliness than to be woven (πλακῆναι) with God, and to become God from the mixture (μίξεως)?"[144] Here, Gregory has made the verb and the noun, although of different roots, to appear synonymous.

Since we have discovered such a variety of mixture language, it would similarly be profitable to consider Gregory's range of use for the word "one."[145] When studying examples of oneness in Gregory's thinking on topics other than the Incarnation, we can grow in a deeper appreciation of his

[137] *Or*. 29.18. [138] *De vita sua* 640–41.
[139] *De vita sua* 642–44. [140] *De vita sua* 647–49; trans. White, 59 (alt.).
[141] *Carm*. 1.1.10.37–44. [142] *Carm*. 1.1.4.36.
[143] *Carm*. 1.2.12.5–7 (PG 37.754). My translation above differs from Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 130: "But likewise, formed by Christ's own hand, you were woven of things both heavenly and earthly." The word *pagēn* here is the first person singular aorist passive from *pēgnumi*.
[144] *Or*. 30.3 (SC 250.230).
[145] Cf. discussion earlier in this chapter on the many understandings of "one" for Aristotle.

rhetoric. Here are but three examples from Gregory's *De vita sua*. Gregory uses a traditional image of juxtaposition to describe oneness: "I could act like a chorus leader between two choruses. Putting the two groups chorus-fashion, one on this side of me, the other on that, I could blend (συντιθεὶς) them with myself and thus weld into one what had been so badly divided."[146] In this way, Gregory becomes a Christ-figure blending opposities into one.[147] Later in this long autobiographical poem, he tells those of the council to become one.[148] Moreover, for his friendship which he describes in the closest of terms, Gregory says that he and Basil have been brought into one.[149] We have already seen in this chapter that Gregory uses the same word for conmingling (*anakrasis*) both for the union of divinity and humanity and for the union between Basil and himself. Similarly, Gregory uses a term for coalescence (*symphyia*) both for the blending of divinity and humanity in Christ and for his friendship with Basil.[150] Gregory's relationship with Basil forms the supreme example of Christians becoming one.

Examples such as these allow us to situate the oneness of Christ through blending against a broader semantic field of references to oneness from mixtures in Gregory's works. It is not suggested that Gregory's belief in the oneness of Christ is exactly the same as his understanding of the oneness of himself with Basil or with other Christians. Yet, there is a correlation. Gregory preaches how just as the one Church has been split into many parts, following many Pauls, Apolloses, and Cephases, so too there are many Christs in place of the one: the generated Christ, the created Christ, the one who originated from Mary, the one resolved back into the source from which he came, the mindless human, and the being as well as the appeared (*ton onta kai ton phainomenon*).[151] What we find is that Christ's mingling comes not simply to heal Gregory's own mixture, but also to blend together all by faith in the one Christ. Gregory sees himself as a leader for this blend of Christians in Christ's own unity.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, the idea of mixture has the greatest significance for understanding Gregory's Christology. Through this language, Gregory emphasizes

[146] *De vita sua* 1536–38; trans. Meehan, 119 (alt.). [147] Cf. Eph. 2: 13–18.

[148] *De vita sua* 1834. Cf. *Or*. 7.23 for a similar expression of becoming one. For Christ making two to be one, see Eph. 2: 13–16.

[149] *De vita sua* 231. Cf. *Or*. 43, esp. 43.20 (as if having one soul) and 43.24 (as if having one body).

[150] *Ep*. 1 and 101.5(31), the latter of which is considered below in *Ep*. 101's ninth anathema. Cf. Gallay, SC 208.49 n. 6 and Alfred Breitenbach, "Athens and Strategic Autobiography in Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus," *Studia Patristica* 41 (2006): 293–99, at p. 296.

[151] *Or*. 32.5 (SC 318.92).

how utterly mysterious Christ's mixture and his own are. For Gregory's anthropology, the stronger prevails over the weaker. Either the soul, with the help of God's presence and through good moral choices, will spiritualize and lighten the body (without obliterating the material), or the body, through evil moral choices, will materialize and weigh down the soul (without obliterating the immaterial). The glorified soul's reunion with the resurrected body further demonstrates how the stronger overpowers the weaker. For Gregory's Christology, the stronger again prevails over the weaker, so that God takes humanity to himself in a wondrous new, second mixture. The result of the Incarnation is one from two, but that one can still be said to do things as God and as human. Gregory does indeed show that in the mixing of divinity and humanity in Christ, God the Word deifies humanity, first, in Christ himself, whose effects are then experienced in the lives of Gregory and those united with him. Gregory strives to give pastoral direction, so that all Christians may be mingled together as one in Christ.

Although scholars often account for Gregory's perplexing mixture language as borrowing from Stoicism, the Stoic doctrines of mixture must be situated within the much wider debate in antiquity initiated by Aristotle. Stoic materialism hardly does justice to Gregory's conception of the immateriality of the rational soul and the divinity of Christ himself. Grillmeier's assessment of Gregory borrowing Stoic concepts of mixture, which suggest the unity of Christ is on the "natural" level, is inadequate to capture his radical sense of transformation of the stronger prevailing over the weaker. Moreover, the example of dried beans and peas is far from approximating the images of predomination that Gregory himself uses. Gregory prefers to steer clear of the typical examples in the Peripatetic-Stoic-Neoplatonic debates, with the exception of that of the human being, and offers his own reflection that distinguishes his position from other Nicene accounts. For example, our Gregory's forceful defense of the mind's mediation in the Incarnation distances him considerably from Gregory of Nyssa, even though it echoes a theme from Origen whose influence in the fourth century is considerable. Our Gregory's consistent reliance upon the Incarnation as a second, new, or comparable mixture to the human-soul composite should seriously qualify Wolfson's generalization about how Aristotelian predominance is used among the orthodox Fathers for their incarnational Christology, but not their anthropology. In both cases, the stronger prevails over the weaker without the weaker being altogether destroyed. Gregory's own use of mixture terms for both himself and his Christ fit neatly into no single ancient model. But rather than being confused, as is alleged in some scholarly accounts, Gregory consistently emphasizes the transformation that occurs in the weaker, when it is conformed to the stronger in things blended to be one.

Through this focus on mixture language, we thus enter more fully into Gregory's autobiographical Christology in which he knows the Word to be

completely blended with his life. To give a further illustration of this argument from a sustained textual analysis, we turn to one of the most celebrated documents of patristic Christology. This perspective of Gregory's autobiographical Christology through particular attention to mixture language can shed new light on *Ep*. 101's consideration of the Incarnation amid competing claims to orthodoxy after Nicaea (325). For among the many voices from the Christological controversies, Gregory speaks from his personal authority as the Word's herald.

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4

Autobiographical Christology II

Ep. 101 in the Christological Controversy

Among Gregory's 246 letters, three stand out as the *Theological Epistles*, which in the manuscript traditions were placed with Gregory's orations rather than with his other letters.[1] Gregory wrote *Ep*. 101 and 102 to the presbyter Cledonius. Cledonius was exercising ecclesial leadership in Nazianzus during Gregory's absence some time after the Council of Constantinople (381). It is the former letter which won chief acclaim for its defense of the faith and will be the subject of this chapter's focus. The third of the *Theological Epistles*, *Ep*. 202, is, perhaps, the least appreciated of the three. Yet, the beginning of that letter can help us situate his entire engagement in the Christological controversy sparked by the Apollinarian threat. Gregory writes to Nectarius, his successor in Constantinople, whom he considered unworthy, to urge him to convince Emperor Theodosius to legislate against the meetings of the Apollinarians.[2] That they should be allowed to gather in liturgical assembly, just as those considered to be orthodox, is an affront to Gregory himself. He begins his letter with rhetoric about himself, which may be of only passing interest to those interested in dogmatic formulations but it is essential to Gregory's thinking in this Christological controversy:

[1] See Gallay's brief description of the text's transmission in SC 208.28–29. For an argument of *Ep*. 102's dating prior by a few months in 382 to *Ep*. 101, see Jean-Robert Pouchet, "Les Lettres christologiques de Grégoire de Nazianze à Cledonios: De la lettre 102 à 101," *Augustinianum* 40 (2000): 43–58. Gallay dates both letters to the summer of 382. For Gallay, *Ep*. 202 came around 387. See SC 208.26. McGuckin dates *Ep*. 101 to autumn 383 and *Ep*. 202 to 384. He argues that *Ep*. 102 must have been written after the death of Pope Damasus (d. 384), as the letter calls him "blessed." See McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 388. Cf. Gallay's summary of the 1892 study by J. Dräseke in Gallay, *La Vie de Saint Grégoire de Nazianze*, 230–32. This dispute on dating does not significantly affect the following analysis.

[2] For a recent treatment considering why Nectarius, an unbaptized retired civil governor would be chosen as Gregory's successor, see Turhan Kaçar, "The Election of Nectarius of Tarsus: Imperial Ideology, Patronage and *Philia*," *Studia Patristica* 47 (2010): 307–13.

> The care of God, which throughout the time before us guarded the churches, seems to have utterly forsaken this present life. And my soul is immersed (βεβάπτισται) to such a degree by calamities that the private sufferings of my own life hardly seem to be worth reckoning among evils (though they are so numerous and great, that if they befell anyone else I should think them unbearable); but I can only look at the common sufferings of the churches; for if at the present crisis some pains be not taken to find a remedy for them, things will gradually get into an altogether desperate condition.[3]

Gregory's soul is baptized, or immersed, in sufferings that go far beyond his own private afflictions. He implicitly imitates Christ, who, on different occasions in the Gospel, speaks of his baptism in suffering (cf. Mark 10: 38 and Luke 12: 50). Gregory goes on to recount a list of heretics afflicting orthodox Christianity: those following Arius or Eudoxius, the Macedonians, and Eunomius himself. All these, Gregory writes, are bearable. Gregory then gives this charge: "The most grievous item of all among the ecclesiastical misfortunes is the boldness of the Apollinarians, whom Your Holiness has overlooked (I know not how), when arrogating to themselves the authority to hold meetings on equality with us."[4]

For Gregory, the Apollinarian challenge is utterly personal, and so he develops his Christology with the authority of his own faith, suffering, and reputation, to condemn that which assaults his salvation in Christ. The words of a rhetor are meant to persuade; Gregory's *Theological Epistles* exercise such a tremendous power that they can make one forget that they came from someone whose own position in the Church, after his abrupt departure from the Council of Constantinople (381), was on shaky canonical grounds. Consecrated bishop of Sasima (a see he never assumed), having served as a sort of auxiliary bishop to his father, and then successor in Nazianzus, installed as bishop of Constantinople only to be later rejected by the other bishops from that see, Gregory then exercised extraordinary literary activity without the typical pastoral ministry of presence.[5] The Apollinarians themselves, despite previous denunciations in the West and their condemnation by the Council of Constantinople, seem to have taken advantage of Gregory's absence from Nazianzus. They came to establish themselves in Gregory's homeland. During this time, Gregory may not have had much institutional authority at his disposal, but he had a creative intellect and powerful words. Like the Apostle Paul, issuing his anathemas in the Letter of Galatians because of the life of Christ in him, Gregory gives condemnations against all those who try to

[3] *Ep.* 202.1–3 (SC 208.86–88); trans. Browne and Swallow, 438.
[4] *Ep.* 202.7 (SC 208.90); trans. Browne and Swallow, 438 (alt.).
[5] See his *Ep.* 125, to Olympius, where Gregory links his concern of fighting Apollinarianism with his recuperation at the hot springs of Xanxaris. Gallay finds that this letter from Gregory at Xanxaris must be dated some time after September 3, 383. Gallay, *La Vie de Saint Grégoire de Nazianze*, 220–22.

disturb the salvation he knows in Christ alone.[6] The genius of Gregory's autobiographical Christology, in which the Word shares so intimately in all of Gregory's humanity, is uniquely positioned to counter the "mindless" Christology of Apollinarius.

This chapter focusing on *Ep*. 101 proceeds in three movements. The first sets forth Gregory's rhetorical context by examining how Gregory typically writes of Christological heresies. The second offers an appraisal of the letter's ten anathemas by showing their relevance in two overlapping respects: against a broad Christological field and within the contemporary debate sparked by the Apollinarian threat. The third studies Gregory's arguments that follow the anathemas and expose their opposition to Apollinarianism. A brief conclusion summarizes the significance of reading *Ep*. 101 with an accentuation on Gregory's rhetoric of mixing. Throughout this chapter, we will draw attention to Gregory's autobiographical cast of Christology, the way that he inserts himself in writing about Christ. Gregory's teaching in controversial writing is intensely personal, reflecting matters of salvation for his own life, and especially his own mind.

Ep. 101 IN GREGORY'S RHETORICAL CONTEXT

In order to understand Gregory's treatment of the Incarnation in *Ep*. 101, we should note some rhetorical patterns and signposts elsewhere in his descriptions of Christological errors. Much scholarly attention has been given to the term *homoousios*, and yet this term does not hold a prominent place in Gregory's theology.[7] Rather, in some of his controversial writings, Gregory shows a preference for attacking a heresy by putting it within a larger perspective of heresies or twinning it with a heresy that errs in the opposite

[6] Cf. Gal. 1: 8–9. I also wonder if Gregory's choice of ten anathemas has some allusion to the Lord giving ten commandments. For Gregory's poem on the Decalogue of Moses, see *Carm*. 1.1.5.

[7] Beeley notes that the distinctive terminology of Nicaea, mentioning the *homoousion* and that the Son is begotten from the *ousia* of the Father, is "of limited value in understanding Gregory's doctrine" as Gregory tends to avoid language of *ousia*. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 10 n. 27; cf. p. 218. Yes, but on a related note, Beeley comes to a non-Gregorian conclusion concerning the language of *ousia* when he determines "a Nicene construction does not require any fewer qualifications and conceptual gymnastics than a homoiousian one does. It makes just as much sense to say that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not the same in being (for anti-Sabellian reasons) as it does to say that they are (for anti-Arian reasons)" (p. 314). Gregory at times uses the theological language of *homoousios*, but never *homoiousios*. For example, Gregory's fictive interlocutor asks him if the Holy Spirit is God. Gregory affirms it. The question immediately arises if the Holy Spirit is *homoousion*. Gregory retorts, "Yes, if indeed he's God." See *Or*. 31.10 (SC 250.292). For Gregory's praise of Nicaea, see *Or*. 25.8 and *Ep*. 102.1.

direction. He also writes with an ambiguity about the exact identity of his intended opposition in doctrinal debate.[8] This ambiguity may be not only a political maneuver for the present circumstances, but a way to show the writing's usefulness for other forms of opposition in the future.

One valuable text in these respects is Gregory's longest autobiographical poem. The *De vita sua* provides insights into how Gregory considers the controversies—spanning a much larger swath than those considered properly Trinitarian or Christological in textbooks today.[9] The catalog of paths deviating from the straight way includes varieties of what could be called paganism (such as polytheists, idolaters, and those rejecting providence), Judaism (such as Pharisees, Sadducees), and sundry erring Christians. From those, Gregory gives descriptions of Jewish Christians practicing the Law, as well as Gnostics, Marcionites, Montanists, and Novatianists. He states that numerous heresies sprang forth from modalists and subordinationists, who believe that the Spirit, or both the Son and the Spirit, are creatures. The last four heresies Gregory mentions concern the Incarnation. Gregory says that there are those who propose a God who is Caesar's contemporary, i.e., those who do not think Christ is divinely pre-existent, and those who are docetists, i.e., those who think that he only seemed human on earth. The final two deserve closer attention: "Some say that the one on earth is a second Son; and others, that the one who was saved (*σεσωσμένον*) is not perfect, but, rather, is mindless."[10]

Gregory intentionally does not specifically name these last opponents. It is possible that they refer to the followers of Diodore of Tarsus and Apollinarius of Laodicea, but perhaps Gregory intends to address concerns that go beyond these two figures.[11] In several places elsewhere, Gregory explicitly addresses what he considers to be the errors of Apollinarius, but he never names Diodore as a heretic, who played a prominent role at Constantinople I, and was considered a touchstone of orthodoxy by Emperor Theodosius after the Council.[12] We also know that not all those called Apollinarians held the same

[8] A recognized example of Gregory's ambiguity of identifying his opposition is in *Or.* 31. See Frederick Norris, *Faith Gives Fullness to Reasoning*, 190, and Christopher A. Beeley, "The Holy Spirit in Gregory Nazianzen: The Pneumatology of *Oration* 31," in *God in Early Christian Thought: Essays in Memory of Lloyd Patterson*, eds. Andrew B. McGowan, Brian E. Daley, S. J., and Timothy J. Gaden, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 94 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 151–62, at p. 153 n. 9.

[9] *De vita sua* 1146–85.

[10] *De vita sua* 1184–85; trans. White, 99 (alt.)

[11] McGuckin thinks that *Ep.* 101, 102, and 202, as well as the *De vita sua*, attack both Apollinarius and Diodore of Tarsus equally. See McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 391–92. Beeley thinks that Gregory is primarily against Diodore, although he opposes both Apollinarius and Diodore in the end. See Christopher A. Beeley, "The Early Christological Controversy: Apollinarius, Diodore, and Gregory Nazianzen," *Vigiliae Christianae* 65 (2011): 1–32.

[12] The Theodosian Code names certain bishops, such as Nectarius, Timothy of Alexandria, Diodore, Amphilochius of Iconium, and Gregory of Nyssa, as leaders in the communion in faith in the Trinity. See *Codex Theodosianus* XVI.1.3. Also, Nestorius is adamant that Diodore was not

beliefs, and so we should exercise caution in trying to identify adherents of various positions.[13] In this very brief categorization from the *De vita sua*, we could presume that the first group's espousal of a second Son on earth follows from believing in a first Son in the generation from God. However, we do not know if those people actually used the language of "second Son"/"two Sons," or if that was simply how their opposition characterized their Christology. In the second instance, we encounter the perfect passive participle of the verb meaning "to save."[14] Did people of that group speak of Jesus (or his humanity) as that which was saved, or is that a designation that Gregory and others say about that group? In any case, their Christology seems to have no place for a human mind.[15]

The longest autobiographical poem is not the only place where Gregory criticizes two opposing unnamed heresies concerning the Incarnation within a broader context of decrying all doctrinal falsehood. For another example, *Or*. 22, set in Constantinople perhaps in 379, seems to be an attempt to broker a unity of Christians on the essential features of faith.[16] Although Gregory avoids some technical terminology, the force is clear in giving an extended treatment of two opposing Christological positions after a catalogue of other errors. After touching upon various heresies, including those of Montanus, Novatian, Marcellus, Sabellius, and Arius, Gregory laments an internal conflict among Christians which occurred recently and has dishonored both God and the human. Gregory distinguishes the divinity and humanity without separating them. In the first position, Gregory attacks those who do not consider God to be the subject of the birth, crucifixion, burial, and resurrection.[17] He says such people love Christ in an evil way and render him dishonor rather than honor, cutting him or combining him into two Sons. In the second position, Gregory criticizes those who think that the humanity has not been completely assumed and so is not completely honored.[18] Instead, for them, Christ was rejected in his greatest attribute, for the highest thing in human nature is that

known to have been impugned by Basil, Gregory, and the bishops of Alexandria and Rome during Diodore's lifetime. See *Bazaar of Heracleides* 2.1; trans. Driver and Hodgson, 333.

[13] A good example of the recognition of a variety of beliefs falling under the label Apollinarian is the treatment by Epiphanius in his *Panarion*. Gregory says that the Apollinarians, like the Manichaeans, unveil the whole of their disease to their faithful disciples. See *Ep*. 102.3(7).

[14] Cf. *Or*. 30.5, where Gregory's uses this same participle, *σεσωσμένον*, to refer to himself saved by the Incarnation.

[15] Gregory discusses these latter two heresies on the Incarnation at further length in this poem, as we saw in Chap. 2.

[16] For the Christian unity efforts of Meletius of Antioch comparable to those of Gregory in *Or*. 22, see Brian E. Daley, S.J., "The Enigma of Meletius of Antioch," in *Tradition and the Rule of Faith in the Early Church: Essays in Honor of Joseph T. Lienhard, S.J.*, eds. Ronnie J. Rombs and Alexander Y. Hwang (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 128–50, esp. pp. 148–50.

[17] *Or*. 22.13 (SC 270.246–48).

[18] *Or*. 22.13 (SC 270.248).

"according to the image" (cf. Gen. 1: 26–27), the power of the mind.[19] Gregory says, in this latter position, that since divinity is united, they have separated out what is properly human, thus making themselves mindless by this act, and not saving "me" wholly. In commenting on not being saved wholly, Gregory continues to describe himself as the one who sinned wholly and was condemned, because of the disobedience of the first human formed and the deceit of the adversary.[20]

How do these comparisons help us understand Gregory's *Ep*. 101? Much of scholarship takes this letter to Cledonius to be Gregory's definitive opposition to Apollinarian Christology.[21] But some prominent voices turn the tables around. Charles Raven asserts, "Gregory bases his condemnation upon the anathemas of the Roman Council of 377, repeating a long series of propositions against various Gnostic and Adoptionist catchwords, most of them more relevant to the Antiochenes than to their opponent [Apollinarius]."[22] Lionel Wickham finds that the letter's ten anathemas are directed for the most part against "Diodoran views."[23] More recently, Christopher Beeley argues that Gregory in this letter is much more set against Diodore than against Apollinarius.[24] Beeley says that when Gregory finally concerns himself with

[19] *Or*. 22.13 (SC 270.248). Raven comments, "In Apollinarius there is a complete absence of the traditional phrases of the Logos-theology which treat Christ as the Image of God and men as made after that image." See Charles E. Raven, *Apollinarianism: An Essay on the Christology of the Early Church* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1923), 187.

[20] *Or*. 22.13 (SC 270.248). Cooper cities this passage in recognizing Gregory's influential first-person account of Christ's salvation. See Adam G. Cooper, "Sex and Transmission of Sin: Patristic Exegesis of Psalm 50: 5 (LXX)," in *Meditations of the Heart: The Psalms in Early Christian Thought and Practice. Essays in Honour of Andrew Louth*, *Studia Traditionis Theologiae*: Explorations in Early and Medieval Theology 8, eds. Andreas Andreopoulos, Augustine Casiday, and Carol Harrison (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 77–95, at p. 89.

[21] Cf. Beeley, "Gregory of Nazianzus on the Unity of Christ," 98–99.

[22] Raven, *Apollinarianism*, 257. For the supposed reliance of Gregory's anathemas on this Roman synod, see more recently Jourjon in SC 208.21 and Gallay in SC 208.40 n. 2. Sozomen's *Ecclesiastical History* 6.25.6 is credited with this information, but Sozomen does not mention Gregory's reliance upon this synod for his anathemas. Francis Gautier also conjectures that Gregory based his anathemas upon a lost text from the synod of 377 or 378 which did condemn Apollinarianism. See Francis Gautier, "Grégoire l'innovateur? Tradition et innovation théologiques chez Grégoire de Nazianze," *Revue d'études augustiniennes et patristiques* 53 (2007): 235–66, at p. 264 n. 99.

[23] Lionel Wickham and Frederick Williams, *St. Gregory of Nazianzus: On God and Christ: The Five Theological Orations and Two Letters of Cledonius*, Popular Patristics Series (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002), 151.

[24] Beeley writes, "Before we turn to the text it is worth noting that these three letters [*Ep*. 101, 102, and 202] are almost universally regarded as anti-Apollinarian treatises. However, on the central point of Christ's unity, they are in fact more strongly anti-Antiochene than anti-Apollinarian . . . . Gregory gives a list of ten anathemas, seven of which argue for the unity of Christ, probably against Diodore (nos. 1, 3–8)" (*Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 129). Beeley later adds that the second anathema, against those believing in the channeling of the Son through the Virgin, is probably against Diodore, not Apollinarius. See Beeley, "The Early Christological Controversy," 5 n. 14 and 23–25. More recently, Behr agrees with Beeley's argument and says of the ten anathemas: "only the last two concern Apollinarian

Apollinarius in 382 or 383, Gregory "gives no evidence of disagreeing with most of his system, despite his prior condemnation by Damasus and the Western councils and his being anathematized at the Council of Constantinople in 381."[25] Beeley calls Gregory's disagreement with Apollinarius over the presence of a human mind in Christ "peripheral" compared to the issues of Christ's unity, where the two reportedly share common ground.[26] Beeley elsewhere writes, "Gregory's differences with the unitive doctrine of Apollinarius are so minor in comparison with the dualist approach of Diodore, that he would have probably never bothered to mount an attack against Apollinarius if he had not been faced with a hostile takeover of his church by a group of Apollinarians in 383."[27] If the Apollinarians thought that Gregory was an ally, why would they have a hostile takeover of his church in the first place? Surely, they thought there was a substantive disagreement for them to do such a thing to Gregory's church.

Looking at Gregory's rhetoric in Christological controversy helps us understand how the truth may lie somewhere in the middle between the extremes of Gregory being solely concerned to defeat the Apollinarian heresy and Gregory giving no evidence of disagreeing with most of the Apollinarian system. Gregory, in fact, offers much evidence of wishing to combat all heresies, including the Apollinarian heresy and the heresy of those holding in "two Sons." He takes particular issue in *Ep*. 101 with many salient features of the Apollinarian system, as will be discussed below. As should be recalled from *Ep*. 202, Gregory calls Apollinarianism worse than the heresies of Arius and Eudoxius, Macedonius, and Eunomius. Yet, Gregory's mixture Christology emphasizes unity in a way that certainly oppposes those holding in "two Sons," who are also opponents of Apollinarianism.

Indeed, in *Ep*. 101 Gregory seizes the opportunity to clarify his teaching, not only against Apollinarian errors, but also against some of Apollinarius's opposition and, in fact, a whole host of past and contemporary Christological heresies. Gregory's words thus form a sort of treatise on Christology under the

teaching, whereas the first eight are unambiguously, though anonymously, directed against Diodore." See John Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore: Texts and their Contexts*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 86. *Pace* Behr, Gregory's rhetoric frequently holds an ambiguity aimed at defeating various opponents (historical, contemporary, or even imagined).

[25] Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 291.

[26] Beeley, "Gregory of Nazianzus on the Unity of Christ," 120 n. 49.

[27] Beeley, "The Early Christological Controversy," 30. Beeley continues, "When we examine Gregory's Christology in the context of the Antiochene debate, it is clear where he stands: against Diodore on nearly every point, and fairly close to Apollinarius except on the question of Jesus' human mind" (31). Similarly, Behr writes, "Compared to this barrage of criticism aimed very clearly and directly against Diodore [in the first eight anathemas], his [Gregory's] criticism of Apollinarius in the following two anathemas is mild indeed." See Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, 88.

appearance of an anti-Apollinarian letter expressing Gregory's faith in Christ. In this letter, like *Ep*. 102 and 202, Gregory interprets the Apollinarian threat to be a personal attack upon him. Here, he says that the Apollinarians are claiming that he teaches what they teach.[28] It should then not be surprising that one can find areas of commonality between the two sides. Gregory crafts his rhetoric, in part, through the wide range of errors addressed by the ten anathemas within an explicit campaign against Apollinarianism. Before considering the ten anathemas, it would be worthwhile to consider the rhetoric Gregory uses in the letter prior to the ten condemnations.

Gregory's first doctrinal objection to his Apollinarian opponents is their rejection of Christ's human mind. He warns Cledonius to protect people from being deceived by this error of a mindless human, about whom the Apollinarians say "Lordly" (*kyriakos*).[29] Gregory prefers to echo Thomas the Apostle's profession of faith after the resurrection and calls Christ "our Lord and God."[30] Gregory then emphasizes a unity that occurs from the one and the same, who without mixture of anything bodily before all ages, became a human being for our salvation. That one is then predicated in a double manner, reminiscent of Ignatius of Antioch's parallelism of Christ the one Physician, in writing to the Ephesians.[31] Gregory professes his faith in the same Christ as one:

> passible in flesh/impassible in divinity
> circumscribed in body/uncircumscribed in spirit
> earthly/heavenly
> perceptible by sight/perceptible by mind
> finite/infinite.[32]

What is at stake in this double profession of faith in the one Christ? Gregory says that by the same one, who is both whole human and God, the whole human being, fallen under sin, might be recreated. Gregory is thus able to hold both the oneness of the subject, who was unmixed before the Incarnation, and the duality of characteristics resulting from that mixture for the sake of human

[28] *Ep*. 101.3(6) (SC 208.38).

[29] Gregory quotes simply *kyriakos*, but some refer it back in the sentence to the noun *anthrōpos*. For a study of *kyriakos anthrōpos* (and its Latin equivalent *homo dominicus*), see Alois Grillmeier, S.J., "*Κυριακὸς ἄνθρωπος*: Eine Studie zu einer christologischen Bezeichnung der Väterzeit," in Grillmeier, *Fragmente zur Christologie. Studien zum altkirchlichen Christusbild*, ed. Theresia Hainthaler (Freiburg: Herder, 1997), 152–214. Grillmeier concludes that the phrase is a contradiction in terms for the Apollinarians (p. 212). As for the confusion over *kyriakos* from *Ep*. 101.4(12), see Grillmeier's clarification in p. 154 n. 7 where he distinguishes *kyriakos anthrōpos* from the Apollinarian use of *kyriakos sōma*. This differs from Paul Gallay's translation of "l'homme du Seigneur" in SC 208.41 and his interpretation in SC 208.41 n. 5.

[30] Cf. John 20: 28.

[31] Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Ephesians* 7.

[32] *Ep*. 101.4(14–15) (SC 208.42).

beings, who themselves are mixtures and need to be saved wholly and not simply in part.[33]

THE ANATHEMAS

Gregory's list of ten anathemas, following this emphasis on the salvation of the whole human being, continues his autobiographical perspective. Through autobiographical Christology, Gregory offers a self-reflection, or self-description, when writing about Christ. In other words, he recognizes reciprocity between believer and the one believed in. Because these anathemas are directed against his enemies, Gregory inverts the process to show how those who do not accept his vision of Christ's life are, thereby, deprived of Christ's life. Here are some salient examples. In the first anathema, if one does not accept holy Mary as the Theotokos, then that one "is without divinity" (*χωρὶς ἐστὶ τῆς θεότητος*). This rhetorical flourish contrasts Mary's relationship to God with the disbeliever's lack of relationship to God.[34] Gregory forbids the importation of two sons (distinct Sons of the Father and of Mary), by threatening the punishment that one will lose adoption, in the fourth anathema. In the sixth anathema, Gregory condemns as God-slaughterers those who do not worship the Crucified, because they participate in the sin of the crucifixion rather than receive its benefit through faith. The eighth anathema condemns those who deny the flesh of the glorified Lord. As punishment, they will not see the glory of Christ's bodily return. The tenth anathema rejects, as mindless, those who do not believe that Christ has a human mind. In short, the punishment fits the crime. Just as the reward of orthodox belief in Christ proposed by Gregory makes right believers to be like Christ himself through Gregory's words, so the punishment for the disbelievers makes them resemble, in Gregory's rhetoric, their grotesque account of Christ.[35]

[33] Brian Daley gives the real objection of the two Gregories to Apollinarius: "Apollinarius' portrait of Christ is not simply the absence there of a human soul; it is, rather, his failure to see in Christ the source and type of God's project of reshaping all of humanity together, and every human person individually, in God's image, through the inner communication of divine life to a complete and normal human being." See Brian E. Daley, S.J. "'Heavenly Man' and 'Eternal Christ': Apollinarius and Gregory of Nyssa on the Personal Identity of the Savior," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 10 (2002): 469–88, at p. 478.

[34] *Ep.* 101.5(16) (SC 208.42). The blending between Christ and Gregory finds a parallel in his Marian reference from his oration on Cyprian. Gregory speaks of a very beautiful young woman "beseeching the Virgin Mary to help a virgin in distress" (*Or.* 24.11 [SC 284.60]; trans. Vinson, 149).

[35] For another fourth-century example of this rhetoric, consider the comment by Eusebius of Emesa on the heresy of Marcellus in denying that Christ's kingdom has no end (cf. Luke 1: 33): "But everyone who said that there is an end of his kingdom has an end" (Sermon 3.24). Trans. in

Also, one should be attuned to the logic in Gregory's ordering of the ten anathemas.[36] The first four anathemas deal with Christ's conception and birth, with the second through the fourth anathemas making more precise the first, concerning Mary as Theotokos. The fifth denies that Christ is simply an inspired prophet; the sixth is in respect to the crucifixion; the seventh concerns those claiming that God adopted Christ after the baptism or the resurrection, and the eighth treats Christ's glorified body. The last two anathemas deal with the two overarching aspects of the human mixture assumed by the Word, the body and the soul. The anathemas condemn the positions of Christ's heavenly descent of flesh and his lack of a human mind. For Apollinarius, Christ is, strictly speaking, not a human.[37] That is how Apollinarius thinks salvation must occur. Gregory's autobiographical Christology sees it otherwise. Christ is so fully human that he takes to himself even Gregory's life. Gregory thus ends his anathemas with this same focus: the Apollinarian mindless Christ who cannot save Gregory and his readers, with which he started his doctrinal exposition before beginning the ten anathemas, and which he will take up at greater length after the anathemas.

Having noted these preliminary concerns, we now briefly consider the anathemas singly.

1. Whoever does not accept Holy Mary as the Mother of God is without the divinity.[38]

With scriptural warrant in Elizabeth's acclamation that Mary is "the mother of my Lord" (Luke 1: 43), the term Theotokos seems to date, in the extant literature, as early as Origen and the hymn *Sub Tuum*, and was widely used before taking a key place in Christological controversies.[39] The title appears in only one other place among Gregory's works. In *Or*. 29.4, Gregory emphasizes how distinctive Christ's fleshly birth was by offering the *a fortiori* argument that his spiritual birth from the Father was even more different from our experiences. In a parenthetical comment he asks, "For where among your own do you know a Virgin Mother of God?"[40] Its use in *Or*. 29 is thus to emphasize

Joseph T. Lienhard, S.J., *Contra Marcellum: Marcellus of Ancyra and Fourth-Century Theology* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 195.

[36] I owe some debt to John Behr's analysis in considering the arrangement of the ten anathemas. See Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 402–7.

[37] E.g., frag. 45 (Lietzmann, 214.28–29). Also, the *Anacephalaeosis* 16 (Lietzmann, 244.2–5) says: "God dwelling in a human is not a human. A human is a spirit united to flesh. Christ is 'a human,' as is said, equivocally; thus he is divine spirit united to flesh." Cf. Raven, *Apollinarianism*, 188.

[38] *Ep*. 101.5(16) (SC 208.42); trans. Williams and Wickham, 156 (alt.).

[39] Cf. Maxwell E. Johnson, "*Sub Tuum Praesidium:* The *Theotokos* in Christian Life and Worship before Ephesus," *Pro Ecclesia* 17 (2008): 52–75, and Marek Starowieyski, "Le Titre Θεοτόκος avant le concile d'Ephèse," *Studia Patristica* 19 (1987): 236–42.

[40] *Or*. 29.4 (SC 250.184).

the paradox of the same one being both a virgin and mother when the Son of God entered this world.

Although the anathema's emphasis on the necessity to receive Mary as the Theotokos may foreshadow the intense autobiographical Mariology that would be seen a few decades later in the piety of the Empress Pulcheria, the title "Theotokos" need not be construed as having the same purpose for Gregory as we later see in Pulcheria during the time of Nestorius's objections.[41] For example, *Ep.* 101's first anathema seems to oppose those who were thought to believe that Christ brought down a heavenly body. In a letter dated perhaps to 377, Basil writes to the citizens of Sozopolis: "What was the need of the Blessed Virgin, if the Christ-bearing flesh was not to be assumed from the blend of Adam?"[42] Basil then accuses those contemporaries who hold Christ had a pre-existent heavenly body to be reviving the error of Valentinus. Similarly, Epiphanius states that some Apollinarians deny that Christ took true human flesh.[43] Although Apollinarius himself fiercely defends the traditional title of "Theotokos," his detractors could use Marian arguments against him.[44] Gregory elsewhere goes so far as to accuse the Apollinarians of docetism, holding that Christ's flesh was merely an illusion.[45] In any event, the title of "Theotokos" in the first anathema could suggest a more general recognition that Christ's real humanity starts with Mary's own "yes" to being the mother of him whom Gregory unhesitatingly calls "God." Anathemas 2–4 explicate Mary's role in the Incarnation further.

2. Whoever says that he was channeled, as it were, through the Virgin but not formed within her divinely and humanly ("divinely" because without a husband, "humanly" because by law of conception) is likewise godless.[46]

Gregory deals with the two parallel errors of not recognizing the divinity of a virginal birth, and the humanity of a real conception of Christ formed within the Virgin Mary's womb, thus demonstrating his wish to exclude all forms of error. Both heresies can be dated to at least the second century, and they reappear in history. Irenaeus gives a condemnation: "Those who assert that he

[41] For Pulcheria's identification with the Theotokos, see Nicholas Constas, "Weaving the Body of God: Proclus of Constantinople, the Theotokos, and the Loom of the Flesh," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3 (1995): 169–94.

[42] Basil, *Ep.* 261; trans. Way 2.233–34 (alt.). Way's translation substitutes "substance" for "blend" and renders Basil's phrase of "the Christ-bearing flesh" to be "the God-bearing flesh."

[43] Epiphanius, *Panarion* (77); e.g., 7.25.5.

[44] For the use of Theotokos by Apollinarius, see Kelley McCarthy Spoerl, "The Liturgical Argument in Apollinarius: Help and Hindrance on the Way to Orthodoxy," *Harvard Theological Review* 91 (1998): 127–52, at pp. 138–40. For example, Apollinarius considers the refusal to call Mary Theotokos to be lawless, impious, and alien to every pious soul (*De fide et incarnatione* [Lietzmann, 196.23–24]).

[45] *Ep.* 102.5(14–15) (SC 208.76–78).

[46] *Ep.* 101.5(16) (SC 208.42); trans. Williams and Wickham, 156.

was a mere human, begotten by Joseph, remaining in the bondage of the old disobedience, are in a state of death."[47] Irenaeus also attacks the Valentinian position that "Christ passed through Mary, just as water flows through a tube."[48]

In the fourth century, these notions are said to continue in the Apollinarian controversy. If Apollinarians believe, as Gregory and others say they do, that Christ brought down his body from heaven, then they, too, fall under this anathema directed against those who think that Christ's body was simply channeled through the Virgin Mary, and not formed within her. A fragment from Apollinarius says the divine Incarnation took its beginning not from the virgin, but even before Abraham and before all creation.[49] Moreover, his *De unione* begins with a statement that acknowledges Christ's conception within his mother but also includes the rather ambiguous phrase: "there was a heavenly descent, not merely a birth from a woman."[50]

A condemnation similar to Gregory's can be found in Athanasius's letter to Epictetus, which, in several ways, provides a precedent to Gregory's *Ep*. 101 to Cledonius. Although Athanasius never names Apollinarius in this letter, it was clear to Epiphanius that Apollinarius, whom he personally knew, was under its censure. On this account, Epiphanius includes the letter to Epictetus in his own refutation of Apollinarianism. One of the heretical statements is: "Whoever says that the Lord's body is from Mary no longer believes in a Trinity in the Godhead, but in a quaternity."[51]

3. Whoever says the human being was formed and then God put him on to wear him is condemned: this is not God's birth but the avoidance of birth.[52]

This anathema considers those who believe that Christ's conception did not involve an Incarnation. Rather than believing that Mary is the Theotokos (as from the first anathema), Gregory's opponents avoid the issue of God being born from her. It is a form of adoptionism, but one that does not necessitate Christ's previous meritorious works, as will be discussed in the seventh anathema. Again, this is already an old heresy in fourth-century catalogues. Epiphanius records that, at times, some Ebionites believed that Christ came to wear Adam's body and appeared to humans. At other times, some Ebionites

[47] Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 3.19.1 (trans. Roberts and Donaldson, 448). This section gives an important Incarnation/deification formula.

[48] Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1.7.2 (trans. Roberts and Donaldson, 235).

[49] Apollinarius, frag. 34 (Lietzmann 212.10–14).

[50] Apollinarius, *De unione* 1 (Lietzmann 185.14–15; trans. Norris, *Christological Controversy*, 103).

[51] Athanasius, *Ep*. to Epictetus, in Epiphanius, *Panarion* (77)7.4.6; trans. Williams, 570. Epiphanius relates that he had heard that Vitalius, a disciple of Apollinarius, did not believe that Christ's flesh was from Mary at all. He was glad to learn from Vitalius himself that this was not true. See Epiphanius, *Panarion* (77)7.22.5–6.

[52] *Ep*. 101.5(17) (SC 208.42–44); trans. Williams and Wickham, 156.

say the Spirit, or Christ, put on the man Jesus.[53] It should be known that Gregory at times approximates Apollinarian teaching to the teachings of early Judaizers like the Ebionites, as he does in *Ep.* 101.13(63–65). Similarly, in *Ep.* 101.9(50), Gregory accuses the Apollinarian version of the Incarnation to be God merely donning a covering of flesh as a mask.

Others spreading a divisive Christology in the fourth century have similar formulations. Fragments, believed to be from works of Eustathius of Antioch, take Christ's body to be the temple, tabernacle, house, and garment of the Logos.[54] This division between the Word and the humanity is evidenced in this fragment: "But the 'I am not yet ascended unto my Father' was not by spoken by the Logos . . . , but it was uttered by a *man* formed of different members, who was raised from the dead and had not yet ascended to the Father."[55]

Moreover, the Eunomian historian Philostorgius gives a depiction of the feud among Nicene supporters that should be considered. According to his history epitomized by Photius, Philostorgius claims that Apollinarius parted company with Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus because "they said not that the Son had become a human being but that he had dwelt in a human being."[56] If that is what Apollinarius thought of his opponents, Gregory would need to refute the idea that the humanity was merely a separate shell, or covering, in whom the Son dwelled. Gregory will use the next anathema to elaborate on the proper understanding of the mixture of Christ's divinity and humanity.

4. Whoever introduces "two Sons," one from God the Father, a second from the mother and not one and the same Son, loses the adoption promised to those who believe aright. Two natures, there are, God and human (*Φύσεις μὲν γὰρ δύο Θεὸς καὶ ἄνθρωπος*), since there are both soul and body, but not two Sons or two Gods (*υἱοὶ δὲ οὐ δύο, οὐδὲ Θεοί*); though Paul spoke of the "inner" and "outer" human, we are not dealing with two human beings. In sum: the constituents of our Savior are different *things* (*ἄλλο μὲν καὶ ἄλλο τὰ ἐξ ὧν ὁ Σωτὴρ*), since invisible and visible, timeless and temporal, are not the same, but not different *people*—God forbid (*οὐκ ἄλλος δὲ καὶ ἄλλος· μὴ γένοιτο*)! The

[53] Epiphanius, *Panarion* (30)1.3.3.

[54] Cf. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1.300–1, which references F. Zoepfl, "Eustathius," 185. Spoerl argues that Eustathius and Marcellus attribute distinctiveness to the humanity of Christ "that might well give rise to accusations of teaching 'two sons.'" See Kelley McCarthy Spoerl, "Two Early Nicenes: Eustathius of Antioch and Marcellus of Ancyra," in *In the Shadow of the Incarnation: Essays on Jesus Christ in the Early Church in Honor of Brian E. Daley, S.J.*, ed. Peter W. Martens, 121–48, at p. 135. Spoerl suggests that Apollinarius may have become "acquainted with the work of Marcellus's one-time ally Eustathius, who explicitly articulated the Christological assertion that Apollinarius would one day vigorously challenge: the idea that Christ had a human soul" (pp. 137–38).

[55] Eustathius, frag. 24 (In Prov. 8: 22), trans. in Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1.300.

[56] Philostorgius, *Church History* 8.13; trans. Amidon, 120.

> pair is one by coalescence (*Τὰ γὰρ ἀμφότερα ἓν τῇ συγκράσει*), God being 'in-humaned" and the human "deified"—or however we are to put it. I say "different things" (*ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο*) meaning the reverse of what is the case in the Trinity. There we have "others" (*ἄλλος καὶ ἄλλος*) in order not to confuse the subjects or hypostases, but not other *things*: the three are one and the same thing *qua* Godhead.[57]

Gregory says that Christ is one thing and another (*allo kai allo*), not one subject and another (*allos kai allos*). On the other hand, each one in the Trinity is *allos*, not *allo*, and so the three are one in the neuter (*hen*) in divinity. When Gregory considers even the possibility that Christ is *allos kai allos*, he lets out Paul's cry that something should not be so (*mē genoito*).[58] Reversing masculine and neuter pronouns in what is single and what is multiple from the Trinity to Christ seems to make the point rather clearly and succinctly, but Gregory goes further. Christ is not only one in the masculine; he is also one in the neuter by the interblending (*hen tē synkrasei*). This adamantly rejects those who hold in "two Sons" through Gregory's blending imagery.

But who in the fourth century is said to have held in "two Sons"? Could Diodore of Tarsus be Gregory's target? Diodore does speak alternatively of the actions of the Son of God and the Son of David, but he also says "the two are one son, and let what is impossible be repudiated explicitly."[59] In commenting on Psalm 109, Diodore also distinguishes two (the First-born according to the flesh, and the Only-begotten according to divinity), but then asserts that the two are only one Son and only one Lord.[60] Kelley McCarthy Spoerl follows Marcel Richard in assigning a late date to Diodore's entrance into a conflict with Apollinarius: 378 at the earliest, and probably after the council in Antioch held in 379.[61] Could Gregory have had Diodore in mind by this anathema?

[57] *Ep*. 101.5(18–21) (SC 208.44–46); trans. Williams and Wickham, 157 (alt.).

[58] That this expression has a Pauline resonance especially comes in its context where Gregory alludes to 1 Cor. 15: 45–47 in the previous sentence. Paul uses the expression frequently in Romans, Galatians, and once in 1 Corinthians (1 Cor. 6: 15). It appears only once outside of Paul in the New Testament (Luke 20: 16).

[59] Brière, frag. 30; cf. frags. 31 and 33, as given in Greer, "The Antiochene Christology of Diodore of Tarsus," 338.

[60] See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2.354, which relies upon Marie-Josèphe Rondeau. For Rondeau's study on this within her two-volume work, see Rondeau, *Les Commentaires Patristiques du Psautier (III–IV siècles)* vol. 1: *Les Travaux des pères grecs et latins sur le Psautier: recherches et bilans*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 219 (Rome: Pontificum Institutum Studiorum Orientalium), 93–102. For a more recent affirmation of authenticity, see *Diodore of Tarsus: Commentary on Psalms 1–51*, trans. with an introduction and notes by Robert C. Hill, Writings from the Greco-Roman World 9 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), pp. xii–xiv.

[61] Spoerl, "Apollinarian Christology and the Anti-Marcellan Tradition," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 45 (1994): 545–68, esp. p. 546 n. 6 where she supports the argument of Marcel Richard, "L'Introduction du mot 'hypostase' dans la théologie du l'incarnation," *Mélanges de science religieuse* 2 (1945): 5–32, 243–70, at p. 12. Apollinarius himself did not garner much concern until Pope Damasus's warnings in letters to the Eastern churches from the late 370s.

That is likely, but perhaps it also has a broader relevance. We can consider those publicly labeled as heretics at the time of the Council of Constantinople (381).

The allegation of professing "two Sons" fell upon the third-century Paul of Samosata, and his conjured figure haunted the fourth-century debates.[62] The first canon of Constantinople I gives the most authoritative list of heresies of the time: the Eunomians or Anomoeans, the Arians or Eudoxians, the Semi-Arians or Pneumatomachi, the Sabellians, the Marcellians, the Photinians, and the Apollinarians. Paul's name was applied to many of these heretics, such as the Sabellians, the Marcellians, and the Photinians, by various opponents.[63] Also, the Apollinarians imputed Paul's heresy to their own rivals. For example, the Apollinarian letter to Dionysius decries the division of Christ into two natures, rendering it impossible to call the whole (Christ) both Son of Man descended from heaven and Son of God born of a woman. The letter then states what the opposition believes: "But that which is descended from heaven is called Son of God, but not Son of Man, and that which is born from a woman is called Son of Man and not Son of God. And this conforms to the separation espoused by Paul."[64] Similarly, Eunomius and his followers targeted their enemies, including Basil, as teaching two Christs or producing other double formulations for the one Christ, a charge which Basil's defensive brother turned back at the Eunomians.[65]

Furthermore, although Gregory poses the two positions of a soulless Christ and two Sons as opposite heretical approaches to the Incarnation, we find a prominent fourth-century theologian espousing both such ideas, at least on some occasions. This is quite significant, as Kelley McCarthy Spoerl has argued that Apollinarius was likely influenced by Eusebius's view of Christ

[62] Cf. Epiphanius, *Panarion*, (65)5.3.1 and (65)5.8.3.

[63] Lienhard considers the synodical letter of Sardica (Philippolis), which accuses Marcellus of Ancyra with the errors of Paul of Samosata (among others), and the Pseudo-Athanasius, *Contra Sabellianos*, which opposes Marcellus and Photinus and frequently uses "Paul of Samosata" as a name for Photinus. See Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum*, 173 n. 22; and 220–27. Frederick Norris considers the assessment made in Karl Holl, *Amphilochius von Ikonium in seinem Verhältnis zu den grossen Kappadoziern* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr & Paul Siebeck, 1904), 187. Holl thinks that Marcellus of Ancyra and Photinus of Smyrna, not Diodore of Tarsus, were in Gregory's mind when he attacked the position of two Sons. Norris writes, "The condemned heretic who is almost always in the background in such a charge is Paul of Samosata." See Norris, "Gregory Nazianzen's Doctrine of Jesus Christ," 188 n. 1. Norris concludes this note: "The evidence is sketchy, but none of it points to the conclusion that Gregory had any of the Antiochenes in mind when he rejected the conception of two sons." Among those who wrote against Photinus were Apollinarius, Diodore, Gregory, and Emperor Julian. See Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 233–35.

[64] *Ep. ad Dionysium* (Lietzmann, 258.7–10); cf. French trans. in Rondeau, *Les Commentaires Patristiques du Psautier (III–IV siècles)*, vol. 2: *Exégèse prosopologique et théologie*, 139 n. 359. Also, see Spoerl, "Liturgical Argument in Apollinarius," 146–47.

[65] E.g., Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, 5.2 and 5.5.

not having a soul.[66] For Eusebius, as for some others, if Christ had a soul in a complete human nature, he would have been a mere human (*psilos anthrōpos*).[67] Eusebius distinguished the Logos, biblically called "the Son of God," from the body which he assumed, biblically called "the Son of Man."[68] Joseph Lienhard notes that Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical Theology* repeatedly differentiates the Son of God from the Son of Man in the Church's confession. For example, Eusebius speaks of: one God the Father, one Lord Jesus Christ, and "the Son of Man according to the flesh, which the Son of God took on for our sake."[69]

Interestingly, Gregory's condemnation of two Sons appears in previous condemnations which were taken by some to be targeted against Apollinarianism. Athanasius's letter to Epictetus (quoted in full by Epiphanius against Apollinarianism) warns against those who say: "Christ is one thing; the Son of God, the Son of the Father before Mary and before all ages, is another."[70] Athanasius also asks how some Christians can say, "The Son is one person, and the Word of God is another."[71] Like this letter to Epictetus, the *Tome to the Antiochenes* is concerned about the doubling of Sons to assert two different subjects:

> And being Son of God in truth, he became also Son of Man, and being God's only-begotten Son, he became also at the same time "firstborn among many brethren" (Rom 8: 29). Wherefore neither was there one Son of God before Abraham, another after Abraham (John 8: 58): nor was there one that raised up

[66] Spoerl, "Apollinarian Christology and the anti-Marcellan Tradition," esp. 560–63 and 566–68, and "Apollinarius and the First Nicene Generation," in *Tradition and the Rule of Faith in the Early Church*, eds. Ronne J. Rombs and Alexander Y. Hwang, 109–27.

[67] Eusebius writes, "So who was this (Christ)? Either the Logos (who abides) in God, who according to Sabellius is God (i.e. the Father) himself, or, as is said in true holiness, the living and subsisting only-begotten Son of God. But if he (Marcellus) will say none of this, he must necessarily assume a human soul (in Christ), and Christ will be a mere man: and our innovating writer will no longer be a Sabellian, but a Paulinian." See *De eccl. theol.* 1.20.44–45; trans. in Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 183. Cf. Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum*, 124. For an account of Eusebius's theology that praises him, see Beeley, *The Unity of Christ*, 49–104.

[68] Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum,* 123; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition* 1.184.

[69] *De eccl. theol.* 1.6.1–2; cf. 1 Cor. 8: 6, in Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum*, 124. Lienhard also draws the reader's attention to other passages on the body as "Son of Man" in *De eccl. theol.* 1.2 and 1.3. For a different interpretation, see Christopher A. Beeley, "Eusebius' *Contra Marcellum*: Anti-Modalist Doctrine and Orthodox Christology," *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 12 (2009): 433–52, esp. 443–48. Beeley defends Eusebius from the accusation of having a dualist Christology, and he asserts that Eusebius is not "opposed to the idea of Christ's human soul" (p. 445). Cf. Beeley, *The Unity of Christ*, 93–96. Jon M. Robertson finds that Eusebius has no place for Christ as a "second Adam," and his account of the Incarnation does not primarily heal sinful humanity. Rather, for Eusebius,"[t]he Incarnation was simply a way, first, to communicate more effectively his divine teaching; and second, to provide a human sacrifice for sin." See Robertson, *Christ as Mediator: A Study of the Theologies of Eusebius of Caesarea, Marcellus of Ancyra and Athanasius of Alexandria* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 60–70, esp. pp. 68–69.

[70] In Epiphanius, *Panarion* (77)7.4.10; trans. Williams, 571.

[71] In Epiphanius, *Panarion* (77)7.4.10; trans. Williams, 571.

> Lazarus, another that asked concerning him; but the same it was that said as human, "Where does Lazarus lie?" and as God raised him up: the same that as human and in the body spat, but divinely as Son of God opened the eyes of the man blind from his birth; and while as Peter says in the flesh he suffered (1 Pet 4: 1), as God opened the tomb and raised the dead.[72]

Similarly, canon 6 of the Roman Council of 382 states: "We condemn those who affirm two sons, one who is before the ages, the other after the assumption of the flesh from the Virgin."[73]

In short, the accusation of "two Sons" should not be exclusively identified with a so-called Diodoran point of view, but is widely charged in writings against peoples of various allegiances. In fact, Gregory of Nyssa says that the Apollinarians accuse him of believing in two Sons, but he has never even heard people whisper such a thing.[74] Indeed, Gregory of Nazianzus himself elsewhere gives witness that the Apollinarians charge him with "introducing two disconnected or hostile natures, of portioning the wonderful, supernatural union."[75] By this anathema, Gregory opposes any reference to "two Sons," and refutes the Apollinarian charge against him.

> 5. Whoever speaks of "activation by grace" as happens in a prophet but does not speak of "joining" and "being joined" (*συνῆφθαί τε καὶ συνάπτεσθαι*) is devoid of the higher kind of action and full, rather, of its contrary.[76]

The fifth anathema begins a series of four that deal with erroneous teachings that mark the course of Christ's life. Here, Gregory condemns those who think Christ has been inspired as a prophet in an "activation of grace." In its place, Gregory insists on speaking of "joining and being joined." Similar to his rare use of the title "Theotokos" (just one occurrence outside these anathemas in Gregory's works), "joining" and "being joined" are not Gregory's preferred

[72] Athanasius et al., *Tome to the Antiochenes* 7 [trans. alt.].

[73] In *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, ed. Jacques Dupuis, S.J., 6th rev. edn. (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1996), no. 603, p. 195 (cf. PL 53.320–21).

[74] Gregory of Nyssa, *Ep.* to Theophilus (F. Mueller, *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* 3.1, pp. 120–21). I am grateful to Brian Daley for an unpublished translation of this letter.

[75] *Ep.* 102.8(28) (SC 208.82); trans. Williams and Wickham, 170.

[76] *Ep.* 101.5(22) (SC 208.46); trans. Williams and Wickham, 157. Beeley writes, "In the fifth anathema of *Letter* 101 Gregory seems to be defining his view of the union against that of Diodore (although anonymously, for understandable political reasons)." Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 131. Behr writes, "It is surely only Diodore's success in the capital, such that he is even named as one of the touchstones of Orthodoxy by Theodosius, that inhibited Gregory from mentioning him by name." See Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, 88. As for Gregory not naming his opposition, Elm comments in another context, "Following rhetorical convention, Gregory never named names." See Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 183.

expressions to describe the mixture of the Incarnation.[77] Moreover, Gregory also uses the term of "joined" to describe the work of grace: something which is differentiated from the Incarnation in this very anathema. For example, in his *Theological Oration* on the Holy Spirit, Gregory asks, "If he [the Holy Spirit] ranks with me, how does he make me a God and join (*συνάπτει*) me to divinity?"[78]

Apollinarius rejected the belief that Christ was a divinely inspired man. He accused Paul of Samosata, Marcellus, and Photinus of initiating this error.[79] Again, this allegation broadens the debate with Diodore upon a larger field of controversies. Insufficiently distinguishing Jesus from the prophets would disqualify a theologian from being taken seriously in fourth-century discourse. Yet, the language of "joined" and "being joined" (from *synaptō*) has a mixed reception in Apollinarian works. Apollinarius speaks in his *De unione* of the Word's *synapheia* with the body.[80] Elsewhere, he expresses his disapproval that some persons confess not God incarnate, but a human joined to God.[81] This distinction between the body and the human is obviously important for Apollinarius, whose real problem seems to be with the assertion of the *anthrōpos*.

On the other hand, Gregory's anathema does not distinguish what is being joined—the human or simply the body. Mere *synapheia* between the Word and the human became associated with Antiochene error, and was condemned as inadequate by Cyril's third of twelve anathemas against Nestorius.[82] Yet, Gregory's condemnation resembles other statements from texts used against Apollinarianism. In his letter to Epictetus, Athanasius quotes his opposition as saying: "The Word has come to a holy man as to one of the prophets, and has not become man himself by taking his body from Mary."[83] Also, in the *Tome to the Antiochenes* we read: "the Word did not come, as it

[77] In fact, this anathema is the only occurrence of the form *synēphthai* for any use in Gregory's writings.

[78] *Or*. 31.4 (SC 250.282). Also, for uses of the same verb in a Trinitarian context of the three joined together and the joining of the Son to the Father, see *Or*. 28.1 and *Or*. 39.15.

[79] Apollinarius, frag. 15 (Lietzmann, 209.3–10); cf. Spoerl, "Apollinarian Christology and the Anti-Marcellan Tradition," 555 n. 34. Spoerl also notes that Apollinarius refers to the "Paulinizers" in his letter to Dionysius (Lietzmann, 256.19–257.7) and that references to Marcellus and Paul of Samosata also appear in the Apollinarian tracts *Quod unus sit Christus* (Lietzmann, 296.20–21) and *De incarnatione dei verbi* (Lietzmann, 305.10–11).

[80] Apollinarius, *De unione* 4 (Lietzmann, 187.4).

[81] Apollinarius, *Kata meros pistis* 30 (Lietzmann, 178.9–13); cf. Spoerl, "Apollinarian Christology and the Anti-Marcellan Tradition," 548.

[82] "Whoever divides the subjects in respect to the one Christ after the union, joining them together just in a conjunction [*μόνῃ συνάπτων αὐτὰς συναφείᾳ*] involving rank, i.e. sovereignty or authority instead of a combination involving actual union, shall be anathema." Text and translation in *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters*, ed. and trans. Lionel R. Wickham, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 28–29.

[83] In Epiphanius, *Panarion* (77)7.4.10; trans. Williams, 571.

came to the prophets, to dwell in a holy man at the consummation of the ages."[84] As should be remembered, Epiphanius thought these documents to be central in the debate with the Apollinarians. Whether he was right, or not, in this charge, their relevance to Gregory's own Christological argument against Apollinarians should not be lightly dismissed.

6. Whoever does not worship (προσκυνεῖ) the Crucified is to be anathema and ranked with the God-slaughterers.[85]

Theological questions of how a community thinks of Christ can, at times, be settled by looking at their worship. For Gregory, a Christian worships Christ crucified.[86] His anathema resembles Athanasius's letter to Epictetus, which, however, is expressed more positively through a scriptural example of repentance: "Let those who formerly denied that the Crucified is God admit their error and be convinced by all the sacred scriptures—most of all by Thomas who cried out, 'My Lord and my God!' after seeing the nail prints in his hands."[87] As seen above, Gregory used that exclamation from the Apostle Thomas in this letter's first doctrinal swipe against the Apollinarians.

Apollinarius himself frequently used the argument from worship to support his position on the oneness of Christ against his opponents.[88] Because Christ's death pertains to his body, the Apollinarians object that their opponents attributed his bodily death to a different subject from that of the Word.[89] Those Christians who deny worship to the crucified for this reason sever the connection between Christ and the Trinity and render unintelligible the sacramental incorporation by baptism into Christ's humanity.[90] It was said by the Apollinarians that their opponents, in dividing the body from the Word, also could not accept the tradition that Christians worship the Word incarnate when receiving the Eucharist.[91]

Again, in regard to the Crucified, Gregory does not make explicit here what he considers in *Ep*. 202 to be the most horrendous error of Apollinarius. He writes:

[84] Athanasius et al., *Tome to the Antiochenes* 7.

[85] Ep. 101.5(22) (SC 208.46); trans. Williams and Wickham, 157.

[86] For Cyril of Alexandria's emphasis on this idea in the Nestorian controversy, see esp. Cyril's Third Letter to Nestorius (*Ep*. 17), chaps. 7 and 9, and anathema 12.

[87] In Epiphanius, *Panarion* (77)7.12.3; trans. Williams, 577.

[88] Cf. Spoerl, "The Liturgical Argument in Apollinarius: Help and Hindrance on the Way to Orthodoxy." Brian Daley writes, "A good deal of the polemical response of the two Gregories to Apollinarius' theology consists in their denial of his charge that any other approach to the mystery of Christ apart from his own ends in the worship of two Sons, or in the introduction of a fourth person—the divinely inspired, yet human person of the savior—into the Trinity of the Church's traditional faith." See Daley, "'Heavenly Man' and 'Eternal Christ'," 478.

[89] Spoerl, "The Liturgical Argument in Apollinarius," 140.

[90] Spoerl, "The Liturgical Argument in Apollinarius," 141–42.

[91] Spoerl, "The Liturgical Argument in Apollinarius," 143.

> That which is most terrible of all is that he declares that the Only-begotten God, the Judge of all, the Prince of Life, the Destroyer of Death, is mortal, and underwent the Passion in his proper Godhead; and that in the three days' death of his body, his Godhead also was put to death with his body, and thus was raised again from the dead by the Father.[92]

Extending Gregory's argumentation from *Ep*. 202 to apply to this anathema in *Ep*. 101, if the Apollinarians considered the Son of God to be dead in his divinity by the crucifixion, they would have no reason to worship the Crucified. God would no longer exist in the body after Christ's death. Later in his *Ep*. 101, Gregory considers how his Apollinarian opponents, like the Arians, may think that Christ lacks a soul, and not just lacking the human mind.[93] Death, in this portrayal of extreme Apollinarian Christology, would no longer be the soul's separation from the body, but rather God's separation from the body.

> 7. Whoever says he was made perfect by his works, or that, in the way the heathen intrude aliens into the civil register, he was deemed worthy of adoption after his baptism or after his resurrection from the dead, is to be anathema: what begins, or progresses or is rendered complete is not God; even though he is spoken of in this way owing to his gradual self-disclosure (μικρὸν ἀνάδειξιν [?]).[94]

The belief that Christ merited to be called the Son of God from his works has quite ancient roots, and many protecting the orthodox faith sought to condemn adoptionism. For example, Theodotus of Byzantium is reckoned by Epiphanius as an early adoptionist who thought that Jesus lived as an ordinary man before his baptism, at which time the Spirit or Christ descended upon him. Others of his school placed the moment of adoption in deification after the resurrection.[95] Theodotus reportedly made an excuse for his earlier denial of Christ, made under persecution, by claiming to have denied not God, but the human.[96] This division between God and the human by an adoptionist is yet another witness to the problem of two subjects or of Christ as merely a human subject.

[92] *Ep*. 202.15–16 (SC 208.92); trans. Browne and Swallow, 438.

[93] *Ep*. 101.5(34) (SC 208.50). Gregory then presses that if the Apollinarians grant the human soul of Christ, they should also grant the power of being rational (*noeros*).

[94] *Ep*. 101.5(23–24); trans. Williams and Wickham, 157. The Syriac of Nestorius's *Bazaar of Heracleides* seems to have faithfully preserved what became a corruption in the Greek text found in Labbe (Mansi). Driver and Hodgson write, "Nestorius throughout reads 'revelation' where the Greek text in Mansi has αὔξησιν and the Latin *incrementum*" (p. 200 n. 1). The word ἀνάδειξιν, meaning "revelation" or "manifestation," is now accepted as the correct reading, as in SC 208.46, which does not note a variant. However, the acts of Ephesus have αὔξησιν (Schwartz, ACO I.1.2 [p. 43]).

[95] John Norman Davidson, *Early Christian Doctrines*, rev. edn. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 116.

[96] Epiphanius, *Panarion* (54)4.1.7.

Also pertinent to this anathema, Epiphanius uses Christ's increase of grace and wisdom, mentioned in Luke 2: 52, to be a refutation of Apollinarianism's denial of a human mind. If Christ is without a human mind, how can he increase in wisdom?[97] On the other hand, Gregory elsewhere states that Christ's wisdom and grace could not literally increase.[98] He asks if something perfect from the beginning could become more perfect, and answers that Christ's qualities were rather slowly revealed and made manifest. For Gregory, the increase is a gradual manifestation or revelation *to us*.

> 8. Whoever says his flesh has now been discarded and his Godhead denuded of body, but denies that he exists along with what he assumed and will come with it, will not see the glory of the Parousia. Where is his body now, if not with the one who assumed it? It was not, after all, stored away in the Sun along the lines of the Manichees' ravings, to be honored with dishonor. Nor was it dispersed in the atmosphere and dissolved like living sound or perfume fading away or lightning speeding without stay. What are we to make of his being handled after his resurrection, or of his being seen at some future time by those who have pierced him? Godhead, indeed, is of itself invisible. Yet he will come, along with his body as I say (*or*: as my Word—ὡς ὁ ἐμὸς λόγος), just such a one as he was when seen or revealed for the benefit of the disciples on the mount, the Godhead predominating over frail flesh. We repudiate suspicion by saying the latter just as we correct innovation by writing the former.[99]

Gregory links the idea of a bodiless resurrection to something held by the Manichees, dualists who sought to be rid of the body. Mani says that the sun is a ship ferrying bright souls to the aeon of light and the land of the blessed.[100] This reference to the Manichees has special significance in the Apollinarian controversy, since Apollinarius was renowned for a refutation of Mani.[101] Gregory explicitly aligns the Apollinarians with the Manichees in *Ep*. 102.[102] Countering Manichean dualism by this anathema, Gregory affirms both the invisibility of divinity and the visibility of humanity—even Christ's glorified body. This also touches upon the debate about what Origen held concerning Christ's resurrection and the general resurrection of the body. The denial that the body assumed at the Incarnation continues to exist after the resurrection is

[97] Epiphanius, *Panarion* (77)7.26.4 and (77)7.30.1.

[98] *Or*. 43.38.

[99] *Ep*. 101.5(25–29) (SC 208.46–48); trans. Williams and Wickham, 157–58 (alt.).

[100] See *Man. Ps*. 267.7–9 and *Keph*. 158.31–32 cited by Frank Williams in his translation of *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis. Books 2 and 3 (Sects 47–380, De Fide)*(Leiden: Brill, 1994), 230 nn. 68–69 for *Panarion* (66)5.9.8–9.10; cf. (66)5.22.8.

[101] Epiphanius, *Panarion* (66)5.21.3.

[102] Gregory compares the Apollinarian selectivity in teaching their doctrines to that of the Manichees in *Ep*. 102.3(7).

associated at Gregory's time with the Alexandrian master and those following his eschatology.[103]

Attention should again be drawn to Gregory's use of the language of predominance. God predominates over frail flesh, not by discarding the flesh, but by transforming it to be a godlike body, still visible, yet not subject to mortal constraints. Gregory uses various images to contrast Christ's glorified body with things ephemeral: a passing sound, perfume's fading scent, and a brief lightning bolt. Predominance over the body does not mean its destruction, but it does mean its transformation.

> 9. Whoever says that his flesh descended from heaven, but had no source here amongst us, is to be anathema. "The second man from heaven," "As the heavenly such also the heavenly," "No one has ascended into heaven save him who descended from heaven, the son of man," and any other texts of this kind are to be reckoned as applying to the union with the heavenly in the same way as "Through Christ all things have come into being," and "Christ dwells in our hearts": not in terms of God made manifest but of God as he is experienced only by the mind. Just as the natures are blended so too are the titles which mutually transfer by the principle of their natural togetherness (*κιρναμένων ὥσπερ τῶν φύσεων, οὕτω δὴ καὶ τῶν κλήσεων καὶ περιχωρουσῶν εἰς ἀλλήλας τῷ λόγῳ τῆς συμφυΐας*).[104]

As mentioned earlier, anathemas 9 and 10 give the two fundamental objections to an Apollinarian account based upon the two components of the human mixture: the body and the rational soul. Here, in the ninth anathema, we find yet another accusation concerning the error that Christ's flesh descended from heaven.

The charge against Apollinarius of believing in a pre-existent flesh may be a result of his theory of the communication of idioms. Rowan Greer holds that Apollinarius held so firmly in a *communicatio idiomatum* for a unitive account of Christ that he did not respect the historical dimension of the Incarnation.[105] Gregory closes this anathema with a lesson on how to speak of Christ both as God and as human. Gregory wrests 1 Cor. 15: 47–48 and John 3: 13 away from an interpretation that reads a pre-existent human body of Christ. To counter Apollinarian hermeneutics, Gregory provides two other

[103] For an example of criticism against Origen, see Epiphanius, *Panarion* (63)4.64.5. For a brief summary of differences between Gregory of Nyssa and Apollinarius on Christ's resurrected body, see Daley, "'Heavenly Man' and 'Eternal Christ'," 486.

[104] *Ep.* 101.5(30–31) (SC 208.48); trans. Williams and Wickham, 158; cf. 1 Cor. 16: 22, 15: 47–48; John 3: 13, 1: 3; Eph. 3: 17.

[105] Rowan A. Greer, "The Man from Heaven: Paul's Last Adam and Apollinaris' Christ," in *Paul and the Legacies of Paul*, ed. William S. Babcock (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1990), 165–82, esp. p. 171. For an argument supporting the view that Apollinarius did believe in a flesh that descended from heaven, relying in part on the work of Alexander Golitzin concerning controversies over the divine body, see Lewis Ayres, "'Shine, Jesus, Shine': On Locating Apollinarianism," *Studia Patristica* 40 (2003): 143–57.

scriptural texts, and states that they should be interpreted as those aforementioned. Gregory understands John 1: 3 (cf. Col. 1: 16) and Eph. 3: 17, not to mean the actual flesh of Christ, but that Christ is still existent and present as God. For example, Gregory thinks that the purpose of a priest is to make Christ dwell in hearts (cf. *Or*. 2.22). This vivid example states Christ's presence without literally indicating his flesh.

Gregory's concluding statement on the sharing of idioms, moving beyond Christ considered in his divinity alone, and considered also in his humanity, has had an extraordinary influence on the development of theology.[106] Just what kind of mixing perichoresis suggests is subject to debate, which should be informed by what Gregory says elsewhere in using that term. In *Or*. 17.4, Gregory gives a description. He comments that the only constant in this life is change, and then says, "All things effortlessly slip into a circular pattern (*Περιχωρεῖ γὰρ τὰ πάντα ῥᾳδίως*): when one moves on another takes its place so that we may rather put our faith in the breezes of the air or in words written on water than in human happiness."[107] In the oration on the death of his father, Gregory speaks directly to his mother about the relationship between life and death. He says: "Life and death, as they are called, apparently so different, are in a sense resolved into, and successive to, each other" (*εἰς ἄλληλα περιχωρεῖ πως καὶ ἀντικαθίσταται*).[108] He says that life is borne from corruption, runs through corruption, and ends in corruption. Death, on the other hand, sets us free from the ills of this life, and frequently transports us to the life above, so that death's name is more to be feared than its reality. In another oration, Gregory speaks of the pains and pleasures filling life, "all displacing and supplanting one another by turns" (*πάντα εἰς ἄλληλα περιχωρεῖ τε καὶ περιτρέπεται*).[109] This dynamism in Gregory's usage should not be taken to mean that Christ's divinity ebbed and flowed into his humanity, as Apollinarian perichoretic theory suggests.[110] Rather, our use of titles comes in rhythmic succession in order to express the truth of one Christ who is, himself, a stable blend of humanity and divinity.[111]

[106] The proper understanding of the communication of idioms had great importance in late fourth-century Christology. For another example, Gregory of Nyssa writes to Theophilus of Alexandria: "And because of the literal union of the assumed flesh and Godhead which assumes it, their names are exchanged, so that the human is called by the divine and the divine by the human" (F. Mueller, *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* 3.1, p. 127; unpublished Daley translation).

[107] *Or*. 17.4; trans. Vinson, 88–89.

[108] *Or*. 18.42; trans. Browne and Swallow, 268.

[109] *Or*. 22.4 (SC 270.226); Vinson, 120.

[110] By way of contrast, Apollinarius thinks that the activity of Christ's divinity either withdraws or mingles, as in the case of Christ's hunger. When the divinity mingled with the humanity, hunger was forestalled; when the divinity withdrew from the humanity, hunger came. See frag. 127 (Lietzmann, 238.14–24), trans. in Norris, *The Christological Controversy*, 111.

[111] Cf. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 418–28, and Harrison, "Perichoresis in the Greek Fathers."

> 10. Whoever has his hope on a human being without mind is actually mindless himself and unworthy of being saved in his entirety. The unassumed is the unhealed, but what is united with God is also being saved (*Τὸ γὰρ ἀπρόσ ληπτον, ἀθεράπευτον· ὃ δὲ ἥνωται τῷ Θεῷ, τοῦτο καὶ σῴζεται*). Had half of Adam fallen, what was assumed and is being saved would have been half too; but if the whole fell he is united to the whole of what was born and is being saved wholly. They are not, then, to begrudge us our entire salvation or to fit out a Savior with only bones and sinews and the picture of a human being. If the human being is without a soul—why, that is what the Arians say too, intending to apply the suffering to the Godhead, the mover of the body also being the sufferer! If he has a soul, but if he has not mental consciousness, can he be human? Man is not an animal without mind! The form, 'the tabernacle,' must have been human, but the soul might be a horse's soul or a cow's or some other unintelligent beast's. That, at any rate, will be what is being saved! I was cheated by the Truth (*διεψεύσθην ἐγὼ παρὰ τῆς ἀληθείας*). One does the bragging, another got the honor. But if the human being is mentally conscious, if he is not without mind, they are to stop behaving in so actually mindless a way.[112]

Here, we have the most celebrated line of Gregory's Christology: "The unassumed is the unhealed, but what is united with God is also being saved." Gregory is emphasizing that the Word's assumption of a complete humanity heals the complete humanity of Gregory and his readers. It is not enough that the Word assumes merely a body. He compares his opponents in this regard to the Arians, who held that Christ was without a human soul. Moreover, if the Word simply assumed an animal soul, i.e. a soul giving life to a body but itself devoid of human intelligence, then that could not save Gregory.

Gregory's anathema bears resemblance to the *Tome to the Antiochenes*:

> For they confessed also that the Savior had not a body without a soul, nor without sense or intelligence; for it was not possible, when the Lord had become man for us, that his body should be without intelligence: nor was the salvation effected in the Word himself a salvation of body only, but of soul also.[113]

It also follows upon the Roman synod's decree, under the authority of Pope Damasus, that was sent to an Antiochene synod, at which over 150 bishops of the East signed, including Meletius of Antioch and Diodore of Tarsus.[114] The decree states:

[112] *Ep.* 101.5(32–35) (SC 208.50); trans. Williams and Wickham, 158.

[113] Athanasius et al., *Tome to the Antiochenes* 7.

[114] For text, translation, and study of the Exemplar of the Synod of 93 Bishops held at Rome: From the imperial rescript, see *On the Communion of Damasus and Meletius: Fourth-Century Synodal Formulae in the* Codex Veronensis LX, ed. and trans. Lester L. Field, Jr., Studies and Texts 145 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2004). The Roman text was apparently sent to an Antiochene synod (379) for an agreement of the faith between Rome and the East. The list of seven eastern bishops, headed by Meletius, is followed by a statement that the other 146 eastern bishops are named in the original (p. 21). The seven named bishops include Pelagius of Laodicea and Diodore of Tarsus.

> They are alleged to say that our Lord and Savior from the Virgin Mary was imperfect, that is, that he assumed the human without a mind (*sine sensu hominem suscepisse*). Oh, how great the proximity of the Arians will be to such a sense. . . . But if, at any rate, an imperfect human was assumed, the gift of God is imperfect: our salvation is imperfect, because the whole human was not saved. . . . The whole had perished, that is, in soul and body, in mind and in the whole nature of his substance. If, in these, the whole human had perished, then it was necessary that what had perished should be saved.[115]

Also, the Roman council in 382 issued its canon 7: "We condemn those who say that the Word of God dwelling in human flesh took the place of the rational and spiritual soul, since the Son and the Word of God did not replace the rational and spiritual soul in his body but rather assumed our soul (i.e., a rational and spiritual one) without sin and saved it."[116]

What Gregory adds to all these is his intensely personal interest of his autobiographical Christology. If the Word did not assume a rational soul, Gregory quips in his self-referential fashion, then *he* was cheated by the Truth. As we have repeatedly seen, Gregory emphasizes that the Word incarnate heals his mind. If the Word did not take up a mind like that of Gregory's, then Gregory's mind has no salvation.

GREGORY'S SALVATION AFTER THE ANATHEMAS

After this tenth anathema reprising Gregory's comments on the Apollinarian mindless Christology that prefaced the ten anathemas, Gregory sets his aim squarely on Apollinarian objections to his account of the Incarnation's mixture. As for the first objection that places divinity in place of the human mind in Christ, Gregory asks how that could help him. Gregory advises to keep the human being whole and mix in the divinity so as to benefit "me" wholly.[117] When he hears the objection that Christ does not have room for two whole things, Gregory reviews the language of mixture in depth. In the mixture of the Incarnation, there are not two bodies which would make someone legitimately concerned about space. Incorporeal things can mix with other incorporeal things and with corporeal things in an indivisible and incorporeal way.[118]

[115] Exemplar of the Synod of 93 Bishops; trans. Field, 17–19 (alt.).
[116] Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, no. 603, p. 195 (cf. PL 53.320B).
[117] *Ep*. 101.6(36) (SC 208.52).
[118] Charles Raven comments on this passage from *Ep*. 101: "Gregory has laid his finger upon the gravest defect of Hellenic and indeed of most early theology, its subservience to chemical and physical metaphors." See Raven, *Apollinarianism*, 258. Raven then finds Gregory's Christology to be "something of a disappointment" in continuing mixture imagery. Raven writes: "Having protested against the dictum that two perfect natures cannot become one, he goes on to show

Gregory gives several examples. One of them is himself: "I myself have had room for soul, reason and mind, and Holy Spirit as well."[119] He then takes a closer examination of the mind and God. The mind is complete in itself, but it is also God's servant and under God's control. Gregory gives some striking examples of what predominance means. The first is how the stars continue to shine in the daytime, but go unnoticed because of the brightness of the sun. The second is that of a little lamp next to a blazing pyre. The lamp does not go out, does not shine out, does not part company with the pyre. Gregory concludes, "No, the stronger prevails and all is pyre."[120] Gregory takes the third Apollinarian objection: that our mind is damned, again, from the viewpoint of what is stronger and what is weaker. If the mind is damned, what about the flesh? The flesh is obviously lower than the mind. But if even the flesh can be saved, then so, too, can the higher portion of the human being: the mind. Gregory accuses his opponent of abusing "my mind," for his opponent fails to see how God comes to save the flesh through the mind. Gregory sarcastically deprecates himself and asserts what the Apollinarian fails to accept: "What answer shall I give (*or*: What is my Word? *Ὁ δὲ ἐμὸς λόγος τίς*), unlearned as I am and no philosopher? Mind mingles with mind (*Ὁ νοῦς τῷ νοΐ μίγνυται*), closer to Godhead as it is and more familiar, through it mediating between Godhead and grossness of flesh (*θεότητι καὶ παχύτητι*)."[121]

He then considers the Apollinarian argument for the Incarnation, as God conversing with humans under a covering of flesh as a mask. But then, what is so new at the Incarnation? Gregory uses *paraleipsis* to say that he will refrain from noting that God did already speak to humans in the burning bush (Exod. 3), and even in human form (e.g., Gen. 18), before the Incarnation. But if salvation is "like sanctifying like," then God needed not only flesh and the animating soul, both of which had been condemned, but also the mind. The mind was the very thing that did not keep the commandments and needed salvation, and so God assumed a human mind.

With that, Gregory thinks that the case against Apollinarius and his incumbent errors on the Incarnation has been demonstrated with certainty. For if God could save humans without assuming a mind, then God could also save humans without assuming a body. Gregory faults the Apollinarian

how fully he agrees with what he has rejected, by arguing that relatively to the divine the human mind is of such infinite smallness that 'the greater prevails over it' and it is virtually absorbed. Like his adversary, he cannot escape from the physical" (p. 259). Raven does not seem to appreciate Gregory's distinction.

[119] *Ep.* 101.6(38) (SC 208.52); trans. Williams and Wickham, 159.

[120] *Ep.* 101.7(45) (SC 208.54); trans. Williams and Wickham, 160.

[121] *Ep.* 101.8(49) (SC 208.56); trans. Williams and Wickham, 160. The last three words may indicate Gregory's love for the poetic, oral similarity in this grammatical form between two dissimilarities: divinity and fat.

interpretation of Scripture, an interpretation that is according to the flesh, and not the spirit. He ridicules the Apollinarian attempt to interpret John 1: 14 as a proof that the Word took flesh, but not a soul. According to Gregory, they removed the mind "so that they might glue God to the flesh" (*ἵνα Θεὸν σαρκὶ συγκολλήσωσιν*).[122] Gregory was not going to dignify their efforts with the broad range of mixing language that he approved; the verb *synkollaō* "to glue," or "to cement together," appears here in a derogatory fashion.[123] So why did the Evangelist write that the Word *became flesh*, if he became more than flesh? Gregory answers that God's love for us could not be shown without saying *flesh*, because the flesh is less than the soul. God comes down all the way to assume even our flesh, even becoming sin and a curse for our sake, as Paul says.[124] Gregory also gives the Isaian text quoted in Matthew's Gospel: "he assumed our transgressions and bore our sins."[125] Gregory here ends his response to the Apollinarian objection concerning the Incarnation. He says that the point is clear and can be easily understood by ordinary people. This practice of concluding in a rhetoric of simplicity is a common polemical device for Gregory, and should not be taken to suggest that Apollinarianism is less a threat than other heresies.[126] Gregory wants all his opponents to appear foolish. Moreover, he writes that he did not undertake this letter to compose a treatise, but to check error. In other words, Gregory considers this merely an ad hoc response against the heresy, although his readers may be excused if they think it is a little treatise.

Gregory rounds out the letter by taking the opportunity to assail the Apollinarians on other points. He accuses them of holding a millenarian eschatology that is at once a "second Judaism," with a pagan cyclical return of time.[127] As for the Trinity, Apollinarius gives the title of divinity to the Holy Spirit, but makes the Trinity to consist of a great Spirit, a greater Son, and a

[122] *Ep*. 101.11(56) (SC 208.60); trans. Williams and Wickham, 161.

[123] Cf. Gregory's ridicule of Apollinarian mixture language in *Ep*. 102.3(9) and 102.4(11).

[124] Cf. 2 Cor. 5: 21 and Gal. 3: 13.

[125] Cf. Isa. 53: 4 and Matt. 8: 17.

[126] *Pace* Beeley who writes, "Although it may be tempting to regard Gregory's heavily anti-Antiochene position in position in *Letters* 101–102 as an answer to Apollinarius, as if to prove Gregory's orthodoxy on the most central points of Apollinarius' doctrine, this would be an overestimation of the extent to which Gregory actually felt threatened by Apollinarius as a theologian or a churchman." See Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 292. Again, it should be emphasized that Gregory in *Ep*. 202 says that Apollinarianism is the worst heresy to afflict the Church. As for Gregory's rhetoric decrying the sheer stupidity of the Apollinarian position, compare the numerous remarks to that effect against his opponents in the *Theological Orations*.

[127] Cf. Gregory's similar charge concerning his opposition as another Judaism in *Ep*. 102.5 (14). But notice that here, in *Ep*. 101, Gregory characterizes his opponents as presenting eschatological views that are both Jewish and pagan!

greatest Father. Gregory explains that in saying "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are God" there is one and the same title, as well as one and the same nature, substance, and power of the divinity. With such a profound set of disagreements, Gregory wants to make certain that no one can legitimately accuse him of communion with these heretics. After mentioning how he might rival the Apollinarians in their literary output, he closes with a restatement that people should not consider him negligent against such a wicked dogma.[128] In defending himself against the Apollinarian attack, Gregory's words serve as a lasting monument to his personal faith in Christ.

CONCLUSION

In Chapter 3, we saw how Gregory's anthropology is of the utmost importance for his Christology: the mixture of Christ can best be appreciated by considering that mixture in relation to the mixture of Gregory's own humanity. Here, in Chapter 4's study of *Ep*. 101, we find Gregory's grave disagreements with the Apollinarians concerning the Incarnation's blend. To defend his own faith, Gregory gives ten anathemas which stake out the limits of right thinking on Christ. These anathemas, at times quite succinct and puzzling in tone, can be read, both as an ad hoc treatment against the Apollinarian threat of Gregory's time, *and* a more general statement on Christological principles. Several of these principles touch upon the disputes surrounding Diodore of Tarsus, who vehemently opposed Apollinarius and whose writings were coming under a cloud of suspicion. In the midst of fighting various dangers, Gregory's most influential statement on the Incarnation defends not only the orthodox faith in Christ, but also his reputation. Gregory defends himself from the Apollinarians, who seek to take over his church in Nazianzus, and from all who accuse him of shirking his responsibilities.

Ep. 101 thus stands as an impressive witness to Gregory's autobiographical concern in defending the doctrine of the Incarnation. In order to be saved, Apollinarians believe in a Christ that is dissimilar from them. Gregory's autobiographical Christology holds that God must be mixed with all that Gregory is, in order for him to be saved. As is widely acknowledged, Gregory's thought on the Incarnation is utterly soteriological. What this study continues to show is that Gregory's thought is profoundly personal: showing Gregory's focus that Christ is completely with him by accepting all that he is; using

[128] For Gregory's rivalry against Apollinarianism in writing works of literature, see discussion in Chap. 2.

distinctive mixture language; expressing his concern for his own salvation as representative of others; and addressing a threat that he feels in the turmoil of his life. With the power of these words, Gregory will be considered, by opposing fifth-century theologians in subsequent debates, the winner of this controversy. Now we will turn to how Gregory seeks to win over people to his way of life through his preaching on the mysteries of Christ's life.

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5

Autobiographical Christology III

The Mysteries of Christ

"It is the day of resurrection and an auspicious beginning," proclaims Gregory in the first line of his first oration.[1] Indicating his characteristic blend of the mysteries of Christ's life with his own life, *Or.* 1 is entitled, *On Pascha and on his Slowness*. Soon after being ordained a priest, perhaps at a festival honoring Christ's birth on December 25, 361 or January 6, 362, Gregory escaped to Pontus for an extended retreat with Basil.[2] He returned to Nazianzus in time to celebrate Christ's resurrection at Easter, but much had happened in his delay to take up priestly responsibilities. Many in the church of Nazianzus accused their bishop, the elder Gregory, of heresy, and they separated themselves from communion with him.[3] Our Gregory preached this oration to celebrate Christ's resurrection from the dead and to urge unity under his father as the church's shepherd.

Gregory would soon take up an apology with an extended treatment on the priesthood in *Or.* 2, *On his flight*. But in this first oration, Gregory emphasizes what his obedience to his father for priestly service means to the community. His father is an Abraham, giving his only son, the one born of the promise, as a

[1] *Or.* 1.1 (SC 247.72); trans. Harrison, 57. Introducing SC 247, Bernardi calls Gregory's *Or.* 1 "the first sermon of his life" (p. 22). There remains a scholarly controversy about the proper ordering of Gregory's orations. Elm prefers to call *Or.* 2 Gregory's inaugural address, and thinks that *Or.* 2 comes from 363. See her *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 147–5, esp. pp. 154–5 n. 30.

[2] Bernardi disagrees with Gallay in interpreting *Or.* 1 as referring to Gregory's ordination at Christmas and his return at Easter. Gregory says that a mystery anointed him, and that he returns with a mystery (*Or.* 1.2). For Bernardi, the first reference to the mystery simply refers to the priesthood and has no connection with a liturgical feast. See Bernardi, *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze*, 125 n. 2; cf. Bernardi, *La Prédication des Pères Cappadociens*, 96–98. McGuckin asserts that it was Christmas. See McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 101.

[3] For a plausible reconstruction of these events, see McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 100–15. McGuckin thinks that the elder Gregory signed a statement that was perhaps heretical, only by omission, causing the Nicene monks in Nazianzus to revolt. Concerning the presence of those zealous for doctrine who revolted from Gregory's father, see *Or. 6*, especially its traditional ascription, and *Or.* 18.18.

willing sacrifice.[4] By casting himself in the role of Isaac, especially in the sacrifice of Gen. 22, Gregory assumes an identity of a Christ-figure at the beginning of his preaching ministry.[5] It is but one of many instances of what Frances Young calls this brief oration's "highly developed and subtle intertextuality."[6] Following Gregory's distinctive blend of *logos* with *bios*, the intertextuality serves to interweave lives: the life of Christ and Gregory's own.

Gregory's Pauline identifications with Christ's mysteries in this oration give an autobiographical hue to his Christology. Gregory prays that the Lord, risen from the dead this very day, may make him new by the Holy Spirit, clothing him in the new human (who is Christ himself) and giving him to the new creation.[7] He sees his role to be a molder and teacher, "one who willingly both dies with Christ and rises with him."[8] After Gregory reviews the Exodus imagery of the feast, he resumes this theme of his Pauline union with Christ's mysteries: "Yesterday I was crucified with Christ, today I am glorified with him; yesterday I died with him, today I am made alive with him; yesterday I was buried with him, today I rise with him."[9] Nonna Verna Harrison underscores that Gregory's proclamation has a double meaning. Gregory celebrates Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection, as well as his own life story, in that same pattern.[10] Conscious of his newly accepted priestly identity, Gregory urges his people to follow him in this spirituality of experiencing the mysteries of the Savior's life, in order that they, too, might become gods. Gregory elucidates the marvelous exchange between the mysteries of Christ's life and the mysteries of the Christian life: "He descended that we might be lifted up, he was tempted that we might be victorious, he was dishonored to glorify us, he died to save us, he ascended to draw to himself us who lay below

[4] It should be recalled that neither Isaac nor Gregory was without a brother, as Ishmael (not to mention Keturah's six sons born at unknown times) and Caesarius were also male children born to Abraham and the elder Gregory respectively. However, God considers Isaac to be Abraham's only son in Gen. 22: 2.

[5] Cf. Jody Lyn Vaccaro, "Early Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the Character of Isaac in Genesis 22," Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1998. This dissertation provides a theological and literary analysis surveying interpretations of Isaac, but does not deal with Gregory's self-identification as Isaac from *Or.* 1. The author has suggested to me that Gregory's self-identification with Isaac may be unprecedented in the early Church.

[6] Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*, 97–99, at p. 99.

[7] Cf. Eph. 4: 24, Col. 3: 10, Gal. 3: 27, and Rom. 13: 14. Gregory's first-person, self-referential voice is muted at times in scholarly summary. For example, Beeley paraphrases: "Christ renews us with his own Spirit, Gregory proclaims, and clothes us with new humanity, as we figuratively die and rise with him (1.2–4)." See Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 120.

[8] *Or.* 1.2 (SC 247.74); trans. Harrison, 58.

[9] *Or.* 1.4 (SC 247.76); trans. Harrison, 58; cf. Rom. 6: 4, Eph. 2: 6, and Col. 2: 12.

[10] Harrison continues, "To keep the feasts authentically is thus to incorporate the saving events into our core identity and way of life." See Nonna Verna Harrison, "Gregory of Nazianzus' Festal Orations: Anamnesis and Mimesis," *Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 18 (2006): 27–51, at p. 39.

in the Fall of sin."[11] Such vivid Christological antitheses foreshadow the rest of Gregory's life of preaching.

We have already studied how the Word—who himself created Gregory to be a mixture—becomes blended with the humanity that Gregory knows to be his own. This chapter now shows the dynamism in Gregory's exposition of Christ's life through frequent attention to the mysteries. God came to save Gregory, not simply by being blended together with humanity, but by living a fully human life, encountering what Gregory experiences, and transforming all things with divine power: birth, temptation, teaching, rejection, suffering, and death. Moreover, Christ arises from the dead and is glorified in heaven because he is God. Gregory hopes to follow Christ all the way to his own deification in the resurrection. Therefore, when speaking of the mysteries of Christ, Gregory does not give a listless, objective analysis, but exuberantly incorporates himself and his listeners in the very mysteries that they celebrate.[12] By hearing this preaching, Gregory's audience can experience the deeds, sufferings, and new life of Christ.

This chapter first sets Gregory's festal spirituality in the context of the early Church, and reviews a scholarly dispute concerning what it means to celebrate Christ's mysteries. This context provides a foundation for reviewing Gregory's rhetoric of evoking events in Christ's life. The chapter analyzes *Or*. 38–40: an Epiphany trilogy celebrating the Word's manifestation in human life, and the manifestation of Gregory and his people sharing the Word's life. The celebrations of Christ's birth and manifestation lead to the celebration of Christian baptism, the focus of *Or*. 40. We will also consider more of Gregory's preaching on the Paschal mysteries. Of the three orations explicitly on this theme (*Or*. 1, *On Pascha and his Slowness*; *Or*. 45, *On Holy Pascha*; and *Or*. 44, *On New Sunday*), *Or*. 45 will be given detailed attention. We will see how his biblical principle of new life in Christ undergirds Gregory's autobiographical Christology in celebrating the resurrection. Between treating those two ends of Christ's life, the Epiphany mysteries and the Paschal mysteries, we will study a frequently overlooked mystery in Christ's life, the near stoning, and its relevance to Gregory's own experience. Finally, the chapter closes with a brief exposition of *Or*. 41, *On Pentecost*, for Gregory's Christology, especially in its preparation for his Pneumatology.

We will observe how Gregory's autobiographical Christology incorporates himself and his audience into the events of Christ's life for liturgical celebration and the day-to-day living out of their baptismal life in Christ. Gregory wants his people to encounter the dynamism that he experiences in having a life completely caught up within Christ's life. This insertion into Christ,

[11] *Or*. 1.5 (SC 247.78); trans. Harrison, 59.

[12] Cf. Christopher A. Beeley, "Gregory of Nazianzus: Trinitarian Theology, Spirituality and Pastoral Theory," Ph.D diss. University of Notre Dame, 2002, p. 164.

Gregory believes, will take him and his people all the way to the glory of Christ's resurrection and beyond, reversing Adam's sin and lifting Christ's people to praise the Trinity forever.

GREGORY'S FESTAL SPIRITUALITY IN CONTEXT

The early Church placed an extraordinary emphasis on the mysteries of Christ's life in the liturgy, in scriptural commentary, in preaching, and in doctrinal debate. One finds Christ's mysteries at the core of the Christian faith. For this reason, the heart of early creeds is nothing other than a narrative synopsis of Christ's life. The Fathers take up questions of who and what Christ is, the subject of much later *dogmengeschichtliche* Christology, precisely by celebrating these mysteries in praise of the salvation conferred.

In a brief, but significant overview, Grillmeier sketches in an essay the mysteries of Christ in general.[13] After treating biblical foundations,[14] Grillmeier transitions to the witness of the Fathers. Grillmeier states:

> The reference to the mystery or to the mysteries of Christ remains essential for the Church. It was most stressed and preserved in preaching and the liturgy. New emphases came from theological reflection (elaboration of the doctrine of the Trinity, and the mysticism of God and Trinity that followed from it) or from the understanding of Christian perfection, for which monasticism played a particular role.[15]

Grillmeier shows the prominence of Origen's contribution.[16] He quotes the tender comment from Origen's treatment on Luke 2, "Let us pray to the child Jesus himself with whom we desire to converse, taking him into our arms."[17] The Nicene controversy and subsequent quarrels in the Christological debates with Apollinarius, Nestorius, and Eutyches provided new impetus to

[13] Alois Grillmeier, S.J., "Geschichtlicher Überblick über die Mysterien Jesu im allgemeinen," in *Mysterium Salutis, Grundriss heilsgeschichtlicher Dogmatik*, vol. 3.2 (Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1969), 1–22. Cf. French translation in *Mysterium Salutis, dogmatique de l'histoire du salut*, vol. 11 (Paris: Cerf, 1975), 333–57.

[14] Passages of particular importance for Grillmeier's brief study include: Matt. 10: 38, Mark 4: 11, Rom. 6: 3–11, 1 Cor. 11: 23–27, Gal. 4: 4, Eph. 6: 19, and Col. 1: 15–20.

[15] Grillmeier, "Geschichtlicher Überblick über die Mysterien Jesu im allgemeinen," 7.

[16] Among those studies that influenced Grillmeier, see esp. Frédéric Bertrand, *Mystique de Jésus chez Origène* (Paris: Aubier, 1951).

[17] An English translation of Origen's remarkable homily on Luke 2: 25–29 is available in *Origen: Homilies on Luke, Fragments on Luke*, trans. Joseph T. Lienhard, S.J., Fathers of the Church 94 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996). Anthony Meredith begins his treatment of Gregory's spirituality: "Gregory's approach to the spiritual life owes much to Origen." See Anthony Meredith, S.J., *The Cappadocians* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 47.

appropriating and articulating the divine and the human in the mysteries of Christ. In this work, Grillmeier does not mention our Gregory, but he does make general references to the Cappadocians, citing Basil and Gregory of Nyssa.

Focusing on Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine, Lewis Ayres remarks: "[P]ro-Nicenes take the soul's formation to be shaped by the action of Christ as incarnate (and crucified, resurrected, and ascended) Word. In particular, pro-Nicenes envisage the process of salvation as occurring through participation in Christ, through, in some sense, a union of the Christian with Christ's person."[18] Our Gregory represents this new appreciation in the late fourth century of celebrating in a pro-Nicene fashion the mysteries of Christ's life for the transformation of the Christian life. Although the bulk of the material for this chapter will be drawn from Gregory's *Festal Orations*, it should not be forgotten that Gregory features the mysteries of Christ throughout his oeuvre, often within writings both doctrinal and autobiographical in character. In his preaching, Gregory especially draws attention to the two ends of Christ's life: the Epiphany and the Paschal mysteries. These were the events professed in the ancient baptismal and synodal creeds, now preached with even greater vigor and precision after Nicaea. But Gregory is more than merely representative of his times. He offers a distinctive approach within a highly developed theological rhetoric to appropriate all of Christ's life for all of his life and the lives of those listening to him. His lyrical oratory, in fact, set the tone for future celebrations. Gregory's contribution in his *Festal Orations* was awarded an unparalleled place of honor in the Byzantine liturgy, where those orations, as well as others from Gregory, appear as readings for annual feasts.[19]

But what does it mean to celebrate the mysteries of Christ's life? Recently, Nonna Verna Harrison has challenged Robert Taft's liturgical study on precisely this question. In an article surveying what liturgy does, Taft maintains, "[O]ur liturgy does not celebrate a past event, but a present person, who contains forever all he is and was, and all he has done for us."[20] Taft recalls Odo Casel's argument that Jesus' very dying and rising are present in the liturgy, and asks if the saving events themselves are in some way present.[21] Taft answers:

[18] Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 304–12, with quotation on 304–5. Ayres focuses on "purification in Christ's body" in this section.

[19] Sixteen of Gregory's orations were taken to be read in the Byzantine liturgy, such as *Or.* 38 on December 25, *Or.* 39 on January 6, *Or.* 40 on January 7, *Or.* 1 on Easter Sunday, *Or.* 45 on Monday after Easter Sunday, *Or.* 44 on New Sunday (the Sunday after Easter Sunday), and *Or.* 41 on Pentecost. See the full list in George Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Liturgical Homilies of Gregory Nazianzenzus*, Studies in Manuscript Illumination (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 10–12.

[20] Robert F. Taft, S.J. "What Does Liturgy Do? Toward a Soteriology of Liturgical Celebrations: Some Theses," *Worship* 66 (1992): 194–211, at p. 199.

[21] Taft does not give a particular citation from Odo Casel. Relevant to this discussion is chap. 4, "The Church's Sacred Year," trans. from *Liturgische Zeitschift* 4 (1931/1932): 37–44, in

> Certainly not in their historicity, as past historical events. But this much is certainly true: they are present to God because all is one simultaneous presence-to-him—and he is present to us not only as the creator who grounds and sustains our very being, but as the God saving us through the instrumentality of the salvific mysteries of Jesus' earthly life.[22]

Such a stance does not seem to do justice to the vivid quality of Gregory's festal spirituality for Harrison.[23] She argues that Gregory's *Festal Orations* make present through anamnesis not simply Christ, but the historical *events* of Christ's life.[24] Liturgical anamnesis has this historical dimension of participating in the events of Christ's life, but it also makes present the mysteries, and looks forward to the future. In this way, worshipers encounter the Lord in the present whose mysteries may be experienced now, as a foretaste of the age to come. From her study of Gregory's *Festal Orations*, Harrison therefore agrees with Odo Casel about the presence of the events and asks, "Can we affirm with Gregory that in the feast days, past, present, and future are made one?"[25]

As if in answer to Harrison's objection, Taft has contributed a more focused essay precisely on this disputed topic of what a Christian feast is; he does not budge. Rather, he repeats a sharp dichotomy between historical events and saving mysteries, negating the former, as he affirms the latter in the liturgy. The Jesuit specialist in Byzantine worship concludes with a statement indicative of his argument's awkward tension:

> And so Christmas is not just about the coming of Christ to Bethlehem, but about the coming of Christ to *us* [original emphasis], and about our going out to others. And Easter is not about the empty tomb in Jerusalem 2000 years ago, but about the reawakening here and now of our faith in Christ's eternally life-giving resurrection via our baptismal death and resurrection in Christ. We shall see this, I think, if we meditate on the texts of the Word of God, and of the Fathers, and of the liturgy of the church.[26]

In the first sentence, Taft says that Christmas is "not just" about the historical event. In the second sentence, he says that Easter is "not" about the historical

Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship and Other Writings*, ed. Burkhard Neunheuser, O.S.B. (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1962), 63–70.

[22] Taft, "What Does Liturgy Do?" 200.

[23] Nonna Verna Harrison, "Gregory of Nazianzus' Festal Orations," and her introduction in *Festal Orations*, 11–56.

[24] Harrison takes issue with Taft in her *Festal Orations*, 24–28 and her "Gregory of Nazianzus' Festal Orations," esp. 46–48. In an introduction to *Or.* 38, she writes, "The event of Christ's birth is made present in its liturgical celebration." See Nonna Verna Harrison, "Gregory Nazianzen, Homily on the Nativity of Christ," in *Religions of Late Antiquity in Practice*, ed. Richard Valantasis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 443–53, at p. 444.

[25] Harrison, "Gregory of Nazianzus' Festal Orations," 47.

[26] Robert F. Taft, S.J., "What is a Christian Feast? A Reflection," *Worship* 83 (2009): 2–18, at p. 18.

event. The first should be granted to Taft, but the second needs further clarification. Taft wants to avoid the idea that Christ is born "again" when the Church celebrates Christmas. But does his denial of celebrating a past event remove the foundation of his argument?[27] The Christian story demands for its present celebration some historical references: a birth from the Virgin Mary, a crucifixion under Pontius Pilate, a resurrection on the third day. Yet, Taft denies the value of a story in anamnesis: "Christ's saving mysteries, then, are not a story but 'the power of God unto salvation for everyone who has faith, first for the Jew, then for the Greek,' as St. Paul says in Rom 1: 16."[28] To be sure, the mysteries are the power of God, but it is not clear why Taft dispenses with the story of the faith in liturgical anamnesis. One can retain the story and its reality in history, without reducing liturgy to re-enactment.

The best answer to this discussion may lie within one of Gregory's orations. He explicates a theology of mimesis in answer to an objection based upon Christ's own example of baptism, and his explanation provides an interesting vantage point for assessing this scholarly debate. The objection that Gregory adduces from his listeners is this: Christ was not baptized until he was 30; why should I hasten to be baptized?[29] Gregory first explains that Christ's case was different. Christ was purification itself, and so he was purified for the one who asks such a question. Then Gregory speaks of a certain unity of all the events in Christ's life as converging in the passion. They become "like one body, not dispersed or broken apart by intervals of time."[30] Gregory further comments on how biblical events do not directly correspond in regard to time for our celebrations. Take the example of the fasting. Christ fasted for forty days before his temptation to arm himself against the devil, and we should fast before the Pascha according to our ability, so that we may die with Christ. Gregory says, "the fasts are one, but the distance between the times of each is not small."[31] Gregory articulates a principle of differentiation for our imitation of Christ's actions: "And our conduct has neither been torn away from his nor bound to it chronologically, but his conduct has been handed down to the extent of being a model for ours while avoiding a complete likeness."[32] This answers the objector's argument, and gives us a valuable insight into Gregory's position on imitating Christ. Gregory rejects the idea that Christ's historical actions are to be exactly reproduced by us, and he maintains that all the

[27] Taft uses other negations. For another example, Taft writes, "Such events are historical, and they are past, and liturgy is not about the past but about the present." See Taft, "What is a Christian Feast?," 17.

[28] "Taft, "What is a Christian Feast?," 13.

[29] *Or*. 40.29.

[30] *Or*. 40.29 (SC 358.264); trans. Harrison, 124.

[31] *Or*. 40.30 (SC 358.266); trans. Harrison, 125.

[32] *Or*. 40.30 (SC 358.266); trans. Harrison, 125.

actions of Christ are held together in the one body of Christ. Yet, Christian actions are one, not only with Christ, but with the *events* of his life.

Harrison notes that liturgical anamnesis is but one aspect of mimesis.[33] She considers how those in ordinary life imitate the patterns of festal events, and thereby follow the biblical stories through a salvific participation. She adduces the example of *Or.* 19, preached on the occasion of the tax assessor Julian's visit in Nazianzus. The purpose of Julian's visit reminds Gregory of the census that occasioned Christ to be born in Bethlehem. Gregory speaks of how "now" angels rejoice, "now" shepherds are dazzled, "now" a star from the east races to the unapproachable light, "now" magi fall down with their gifts and recognize the king of all, etc.[34]

There is, indeed, a liturgical priority of mimesis in the Christian life, but Gregory's liturgical poetics exceed far beyond the confines of a particular feast. Each feast celebrates many saving events of Christ's life. For example, Gregory bids his people to accept the blows and the slap on the face of Christ's passion when celebrating his birth.[35] Moreover, Gregory's festal mimesis exemplifies his pattern of inserting his life, and the lives of his audience, into the biblical story for their salvation.[36] As we have repeatedly seen, such as in Gregory's scriptural hermeneutics (Chapter 1) or Christomorphic autobiography (Chapter 2), Gregory does not need a liturgical feast to blend the mysteries of Christ's life with his own. He sees himself and others as joined to Christ through the various vicissitudes of life.

Furthermore, it should not be overlooked that, for Gregory, Christ's own action is, itself, a mimesis of ours. In other words, Gregory does not merely imitate Christ and urge others to do the same. Rather, he makes explicit that Christ became incarnate in a mimetic identification with us, making possible our imitation of him. In *Or.* 1, Gregory articulates this concept in a succinct, hortatory form: "Let us become like Christ, since Christ also became like us."[37]

[33] Harrison writes, "As understood by classicists and patristic scholars, mimesis names a pattern of thought and behavior that permeated ancient Mediterranean culture, in which people sought to represent, imitate and identify themselves with exemplary figures from the past. . . . Christian models included biblical heroes, martyrs, desert holy men and women, and ultimately Christ himself." See Harrison, *Festal Orations*, 29. Yet, Taft adduces the extra-liturgical Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises*. See Taft, "What is a Christian Feast?," 14, and "What Does Liturgy Do?," 205.

[34] *Or.* 19.12. Gallay, *La Vie de saint Grégoire de Nazianze*, 128–29, and McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 222 argue that Gregory's Christmas language suggests that he delivered this oration around the Christmas season. For an opinion that it does not indicate a Christmas setting, see Bernardi, *La Prédication des Pères Cappadociens*, 132–33. In any case, Julian's visit to collect taxes is "liturgy" in the wider sense of a public work, but is hardly a matter of the sacred liturgy itself. For Gregory's contact with Julian, the interest to protect the poor during taxation, and Gregory's own gift of words, see Susan R. Holman, "Taxing Nazianzus: Gregory and the Other Julian," *Studia Patristica* 37 (2001): 103–9.

[35] *Or.* 38.18.

[36] Cf. Harrison, *Festal Orations*, 35–36.

[37] *Or.* 1.5 (SC 247.78); trans. Harrison, 59.

An example of this reciprocal mimesis occurs at the beginning of *Or*. 40, *On Baptism*. Gregory says that Scripture acknowledges three births for us: from the body, from baptism, and from resurrection. *My Christ* has honored all three births, according to Gregory.[38] Christ honored the first birth by creating the human person, because it was he who breathed in the first and living breath; he honored the second birth by the Incarnation and the baptism which he received; he honored the third birth by his resurrection from the dead.[39] Gregory describes Christ's resurrection in Pauline imagery as first-fruits, the first-born among many brethren, and the first-born from the dead: all images that indicate how others follow Christ to that final birth.[40] As we continually see, Gregory's hermeneutic of blended lives exercises tremendous importance for understanding his Christology and soteriology.[41] Gregory's articulation of the blending of lives celebrates the mysteries of Christ for the benefit of Gregory's (and his people's) own births in earthly life, grace, and glory. We will see this with vivid expression in the Epiphany orations.

THE EPIPHANY MYSTERIES

"Christ is born—give praise! Christ comes from heaven—rise up to meet him! Christ is on the earth—be lifted up!"[42] Gregory introduces *Or*. 38, *On the Theophany*, with this joyous proclamation connecting Christ's mysteries with the actions of Christians to celebrate that mystery. This relation between events of Christ's life and the response in the Christian's life goes far beyond a mere homiletic introduction. It evokes the illumination of the Christian with the light of Christ, as witnessed by *Or*. 38–40.

Scholars dispute the precise liturgical celebrations of Christ's birth, manifestation, and baptism in late-fourth century Constantinople.[43] Gregory may

[38] *Or*. 40.2.

[39] For Maximus the Confessor's interpretations of this, see his *Ambiguum* 42.

[40] Cf. 1 Cor. 15: 20; Rom. 8: 29; and Col. 1: 18.

[41] This reciprocal mimesis of life, brought out in pronounced fashion through Gregory's Christological autobiography, can be compared with the "baptismal hermeneutic" identified by Nancy Johnson in her "Living Death: Baptism and the Christian Life in the Writings of Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa," Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2008.

[42] *Or*. 38.1 (SC 358.104); trans. Daley, 117.

[43] See the overly confident conclusion of Justin Mossay, *Les Fêtes de Noël et d'Épiphanie d'après Littéraires Cappadociennes du IVe Siècle* (Louvain: Abbaye du Mont César, 1965), 65. The lack of sources does not permit a definitive conclusion for Constantinople's calendar. Cf. Thomas J. Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year*, 2d edn. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1986), 137–38; Moreschini, SC 358:16–22; McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 336–37; Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 117 and 197–98 n. 106; and Harrison, *Festal Orations*, 20–21. In her 2008 study, Harrison recognizes Susan Roll as the most recent scholar who has studied the

have delivered *Or*. 38 on December 25, 380. The following two orations were probably given on successive days in the festivities surrounding January 6, 381, as part of the celebration of Christ's baptism as light for Christian life. Regardless of the precise dates in December 380 and January 381, a scholarly consensus supports the determination that Gregory preached these orations in the Church of the Holy Apostles soon after Emperor Theodosius recognized him as the Archbishop of Constantinople.[44] The three orations should be taken as a set, because Gregory intends, by the very structure, to move from Christ's appearance among us, to the mystery of his baptism, and then to the participation of others to put on Christ and experience the mysteries of Christ through baptism. Moreover, Gregory knows that there are counterclaims to the meaning of basic doctrines of the faith, such as the significance of participating in the life of Christ. For example, some Eunomians were said to baptize into the death of Christ, and not in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.[45] Gregory offers an alternative that incorporates the newly baptized into all the mysteries of Christ for the glory of the Trinity.

Susanna Elm studies the three orations "as a unit in order to elucidate Gregory's understanding of 'inscriptions,' 'baptism,' 'change,' and their relation to heavenly and earthly spheres."[46] She argues that Gregory's vocabulary of inscriptions (such as the terms *charactēr*, *sphragis*, *typos*, *grammata*, *plakai*, *skiagraphoi*) describes a defined moment of change, at baptism, which initiates a lifelong process of transformation. The change, which is to be lived, is the impress of the divine on the human, bringing together two stark opposites.

Elm's work can be used to elucidate Gregory's pervasive autobiographical Christology. Our emphasis is now in the "autobio*graphical*." In Chapter 1 we saw how integral Gregory's genres were to Gregory's theology of the Word. Now Gregory's baptismal ministry, expressed through each Epiphany oration (*logos*), writes what has always been written in Gregory's life. Gregory assumes both the danger and the privilege in writing the story of his faith upon the souls of others. Elm argues that baptism's inscription must be referred back to

date of Christmas. Roll does not solve the problem. See Susan K. Roll, *Towards the Origins of Christmas* (Kampen, The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1995), 192. On a related point, Roll writes, "Later or neo-Arianism was not particularly interested in the incarnation as such and thus neither were their major opponents such as the Cappadocian fathers" (p. 174). This assessment of the Cappadocians seems far off the mark.

[44] Gregory was installed in the Basilica of the Holy Apostles and recognized as Constantinople's bishop by Emperor Theodosius on November 27, 380. Cf. McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 325–28.

[45] Richard Paul Vaggione, O.H.C., *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 322. Vaggione thinks that this criticism of the Nicenes against the Eunomians has some plausibility, as it is mentioned even by the Eunomian historian Philostorgius in his *Church History* 10.4. Some other charges against the Eunomians by their enemies have less credibility.

[46] Elm, "'O Paradoxical Fusion!'"299.

Christ himself in this process: "For Gregory, Christ's Incarnation is thus the model event through which the underlying Platonic structure [of heaven and earth as two incommensurable notions] is personalized and transcended."[47] Indeed, Gregory's own imprint that he seeks to leave is the seal of Christ himself, born and made manifest, so that the divine can be made known in the human. The seal of Christ is also mediated through the inscription of Gregory's own life. The following analysis in autobiographical Christology now considers each of the three orations in turn.

Or. 38, On the Theophany

After Gregory's opening cries for people to respond to Christ's birth, he sets the mystery within a greater biblical context: once again darkness is put to flight, and light comes into being.[48] This hearkening back to the creation account is applied, first to Exodus, where Egypt is darkened and Israel illumined by a pillar of fire (cf. Exod. 10: 21–22, 13: 21–22), then to the prophetic actualization of those sitting in darkness seeing a great light (cf. Isa. 9: 1, Matt. 4: 16), then to the shadows disappearing in the Law and the coming of the truth in the Spirit (cf. 2 Cor. 3: 6, Rom. 13: 12). Gregory evokes the prophecy from Isa. 9: 6, and asks for John the Baptist to cry out to prepare the way of the Lord (cf. Matt. 3: 3). Gregory, at this point, can no longer resist drawing attention to his own role as the Word's herald:

> I shall cry out the meaning of this day: the fleshless one is made flesh, the Word becomes material, the invisible is seen, the intangible is touched, the timeless has a beginning, the Son of God becomes Son of Man—"Jesus Christ, yesterday and today, the same also for all ages!"[49]

Gregory notes that the feast is called Theophany (*theophania*), because God has appeared, and Nativity (*genethlia*), because he has been born.[50] Gregory then gives the soteriological importance of *our feast*: God's sojourn with the human race, so that we might return with God. Gregory uses the baptismal imagery in an adaptation of Pauline union with Christ by putting off the old human and putting on the new: being born with Christ, crucified with him,

[47] Elm, "'O Paradoxical Fusion!'," 300.

[48] This theme of light will carry into the two subsequent orations. Hilarion Alfeyev says that the idea of divine light is the leitmotiv of Gregory's works. See Alfeyev, *Le Chantre de la Lumière*, 288.

[49] *Or.* 38.2 (SC 358.106); trans. Daley, 118; cf. Heb. 13: 8.

[50] *Or.* 38.3. Widok emphasizes how Theophany draws attention to Christ's divinity and Nativity to Christ's humanity in a way that could be easily understood and accepted by people caught in the Arian and Apollinarian controversies. Norbert Widok, "Die kerygmatische Dimension der Lehre von der Menschwerdung in der *Rede 38* des Gregory von Nazianz," *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 11 (2007): 335–47, at p. 337.

buried with him, and raised with him.[51] Gregory continues, "I must experience the lovely reversal: as pain came out of happiness, so happiness must return from pain."[52] Gregory's perspective spans the beginning of creation, with the mention of Adam, to the eschatological vision of being raised with Christ. Moreover, Gregory's formulation of salvation history signals how we might live in Christ.[53] Because he assumed all our human nature, so Christians must assume all of Christ's life. Gregory is emphatic that this feast is "not celebrating what is ours, but what belongs to the One who is ours—to our Lord; not celebrating weakness, but healing; not celebrating this creation, but our re-creation."[54] Indeed, the feast celebrates the life of Christ, who belongs completely to the lives of Christians.

Gregory contrasts this celebration with Greek feasts, something he will also do in the subsequent oration, *On the Holy Lights*. He thereby sets the mystery within an overarching catechesis on God, creation, and sin.[55] Gregory must combat various errors, such as the argument of those who think Christ is less than God, simply because he humbled himself for their sake.[56] Gregory finds his opponents, who do not accept that Christ was twofold, to be more lacking in judgment than the Jews, and more faithless than the demons.[57]

Throughout his preaching, Gregory uses vivid sensory imagery to communicate the Christian participation in Christ's mysteries. He says in *Or*. 38, "A little later, then, you will also see Jesus cleansed in the Jordan with the same bath that cleanses me."[58] Gregory will go on to correct his statement, as Christ's baptism is not so much a cleaning of Christ himself, as it is a way of making the water holy. Christ's baptism is *my cleansing*, because the baptism of Christ in the Jordan institutes the purification of baptism for Gregory and his people. Gregory continues after Christ's baptism with many mysteries: the temptations, conquering the temptations, the service by angels, healing the sick and raising the dead, exorcising demons, feeding thousands, walking on

[51] Gregory expands the Pauline formulations of union with Christ's mysteries to include being "born with Christ," an event particularly appropriate for the feast. Cf. Rom. 6: 3–4; Gal. 2: 19; and Col. 2: 9–3: 3.

[52] *Or*. 38.4 (SC 358.110); trans. Daley, 118.

[53] As for the Garden of Eden, Bouteneff says, "As he [Gregory] reminds us not only in *Or*. 38, but throughout his corpus, Paradise ultimately concerns two things: us, and Christ." See Peter Bouteneff, "Whatever That Was!: Paradise According to Gregory of Nazianzus," *Studia Patristica* 47 (2010): 141–45, at p. 144.

[54] *Or*. 38.4 (SC 358.110); trans. Daley, 119.

[55] For his contrast to Greek feasts, see *Or*. 38.5–6; cf. *Or*. 39.3–7. For his catechesis, see *Or*. 38.7–13.

[56] Widok argues that Gregory's *Or*. 38 is kerygmatic and avoids the technical language used in the doctrinal debates on the Incarnation. Widok, "Die kerygmatische Dimension der Lehre von der Menschwerdung in der *Rede* 38 des Gregory von Nazianz." But the avoidance of technical language is simply characteristic of much of Gregory's Christology.

[57] *Or*. 38.15.

[58] *Or*. 38.16 (SC 358.140); trans. Daley, 125.

water, being betrayed, crucified, and buried, the resurrection, the ascension, and the return in glory. In speaking of the cross, Gregory says that Christ crucifies, with himself, *my sin*.[59] He then expresses his autobiographical Christology of the mysteries in the strongest of terms: "How many festivals there are, it seems to me, for each of the mysteries of Christ! Yet there is one main point for all of them: my perfection, my re-shaping, my return to the first Adam."[60]

Gregory focuses in the final paragraphs of this oration on a mystical participation in the mysteries. First, he selects key moments of the beginning of Christ's life on earth. As for the mysteries of Christ in the womb and in infancy, Gregory tells his people to leap with joy at his conception, nicely connecting the unborn John the Baptist of Luke 1: 44 with David who leapt when the ark came in 2 Sam. 6: 14. Using the language of writing, he says, "Revere the census, by which you were enrolled as a citizen of heaven."[61] People should be in awe at Christ's birth, and honor little Bethlehem. Moreover, he likens them to the animals without reason who gathered at the manger. Alluding to the ox and ass in Isa. 1: 3, Gregory preaches that Christians are to recognize their owner and know the manger of the Lord himself. He gives yet another rousing exclamation: "Give glory with the shepherds, sing praise with the angels, dance with the company of the archangels! Let there be a common festival for the powers of heaven and earth!"[62]

Second, Gregory links the mysteries of Christ's birth to later events, beginning with the flight into Egypt. In accord with his appreciation for the metaphor of movement in a dynamic Christological spirituality, Gregory exhorts, "Walk blamelessly through all the ages and miracles of Christ, as a disciple of Christ."[63] Gregory's exhortation not only prepares for the list that follows, but also offers a summary of his thinking on the mysteries of Christ. Gregory wants his people to experience what he experiences: the life of Christ himself. He tells them to be circumcised and purified, to teach in the Temple, and drive out from the Temple those who do business there. He gives an elaborate exhortation about the stoning. When coming to the story of the passion, Gregory says to his people that if they are scourged, they should seek the remaining sufferings, too. Christians can taste the gall, drink the vinegar, be spat upon, receive blows to the face, be crowned with thorns, put on the scarlet cloak, receive the reed, and be reverenced by those who make a game of the truth. They can be crucified with Christ, die with him, be buried with him, so as to rise with him, be glorified with him, and reign with him. In the

[59] *Or.* 38.16. [60] *Or.* 38.16 (SC 358.142); trans. Daley, 126 (alt.).
[61] *Or.* 38.17 (SC 358.142); trans. Daley, 126.
[62] *Or.* 38.17 (SC 358.144); trans. Daley, 126.
[63] *Or.* 38.18 (SC 358.146); trans. Daley, 126 (alt.).

concluding doxology addressed to God, Gregory leads his people in praise that is both directed to the Trinity, and to Christ alone.[64]

As we have seen, the oration on Christ's birth leads people into the mysteries of the entire life of Christ, so that they can experience them for themselves. The oration blends the life of Christ into the lives of Gregory and his people. This theme will continue in the subsequent orations of this set, with Gregory himself as the herald of the Word's mingling with the course of human life.

Or. 39, On the Holy Lights

"Once again my Jesus, and once again a Mystery," opens *Or.* 39, *On the Holy Lights*.[65] Gregory says that the celebration "begins with the baptism of my Christ, 'the true light which enlightens every human coming into the world,' and it sets in motion my own purification and comes to the aid of that light which we received from him as a gift from above, in the beginning, and which we darkened and confused by sin."[66] Gregory's stress on "my Jesus" and "my Christ," rather than distancing his people from salvation, causes them to accept Gregory's leadership in bringing them closer to Jesus Christ.

In his rhetoric of making the people present to Christ, Gregory emphasizes the encounter of the assembly, with divine revelation through their senses of hearing and seeing. He says, "Hear then, the voice of God, echoing strongly in me, a participant in and leader of these Mysteries, and perhaps also in you: 'I am the light of the world.'"[67] God's own voice resounds through Gregory's preaching, and the preacher wants the words of Christ himself to be heard from the listeners. In this case, Gregory chooses the phrase "light of the world," which Christ uses of himself in John 8: 12 and of his disciples in Matt 5: 14. Gregory evokes Gospel precedent: just as divine light can be reflected from Christ's disciples, so too the divine voice can be echoed in Gregory, the Word's herald, and his listeners. According to Gregory, Christ intends people to become perfect light, begotten of perfect light: a Nicene description of Christ himself. Gregory then asks his people if they see the grace of the day and the power of the mystery, and he stresses his own role in cooperating with Christ: "Have you not been placed clearly on high, lifted by our voice and our instruction? You will be placed there more clearly still, if the Word gives a favorable direction to the word I speak!"[68]

[64] *Or.* 38.18. [65] *Or.* 39.1 (SC 358.150); trans. Daley, 128.

[66] *Or.* 39.1 (SC 358.150); trans. Daley, 128 (alt.); cf. John 1: 9. By Gregory's grammatical reconstruction of this verse, we know he reads *erchomenon* as referring to every human, rather than to the light Cf. *Or.* 31.3.

[67] *Or.* 39.2 (SC 358.150); trans. Daley, 128. Cf. John 8: 12.

[68] *Or.* 39.2 (SC 358.152); trans. Daley, 128.

After contrasting this celebration with the pagan honors given to the gods, Gregory discusses the purification needed in order to be illuminated. If his people are not purified, they will follow the Israelites who demanded a veil because they could not bear to look upon the glory shining forth from the face of Moses. Gregory uses material from *Or.* 20.4, an oration dedicated to theology and the appointment of bishops, for *Or.* 39.9.[69] He gives a series of negative models from the Bible of those not yet purified. People must not be like Manoah, Peter, Paul, and the centurion wanting to receive a healing, but not the healer, in his house. Rather, they are to imitate Zacchaeus. Like that tax collector, one who is small in spiritual stature may glimpse Jesus and climb the sycamore. With a flurry of scriptural allusions, Gregory writes how the one purified can then also receive the Word as guest, and hear that: "Today, salvation has come to this house."[70] By this indwelling of Christ himself, Gregory emphasizes how souls work to acquire virtue and bring Christ—whole and entire, or as much as they can—within them. Having been formed in God's image and receiving the Word when he comes, one can hold on to him and reveal him to others.[71]

Again, Gregory sets himself as the model for his people and proclaims: "I shall not only say the same words, but shall speak of the same things, trembling in tongue and in mind when I utter words about God, and praying that you, too, may experience this same laudable and blessed feeling."[72] His people are to experience all around them a flash of light that is both one and three.[73] Gregory gives a Trinitarian catechesis, showing a fierce interest in the realities that the terms represent. By teaching that the divinity is one in three, and that the three are one, Gregory wants his people to avoid the equally impious and diametrically opposed errors of Sabellian aggregation and Arian alienation. After a further scriptural analysis of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Gregory concludes with the similar formula: that there is one God in three, and the three are one.[74]

Gregory then touches upon creation and sin before calling to mind the great mystery involving us: "Natures are made anew; God becomes human."[75] Gregory speaks of the underlying paradox: that which could not be mixed,

[69] Gregory makes explicit that he may be repeating what he has said before in *Or.* 39.11. This could also refer to *Or.* 38, which he summarizes (cf. *Or.* 39.14).

[70] Luke 19: 9.

[71] *Or.* 39.10.

[72] *Or.* 39.11 (SC 358.170); trans. Daley, 132.

[73] For this idea in Gregory's works, see Verna Harrison, "Illumined from All Sides by the Trinity: Neglected Themes in Gregory's Trinitarian Theology," in *Re-reading Gregory of Nazianzus*, ed. Christopher A. Beeley, 13–30, esp. pp. 17–22.

[74] *Or.* 39.12; cf. *Or.* 38.15. One must have the right faith in the Trinity in order to celebrate the mysteries of Christ's life worthily.

[75] *Or.* 39.13 (SC 358.176); trans. Daley, 134; cf. Maximus the Confessor's interpretations of this phrase in his *Ambiguum* 41.

has now been mixed in the Incarnation. Hearkening back to his oration *On the Theophany*, he calls himself the leader (*exarchos*) of that feast.[76] He recalls, for the people, how they ran with the star, worshipped with the magi, were illuminated with the shepherds, glorified with the angels, took Christ into their arms with Simeon, and made confession over him with Anna. Gregory then introduces the new subject with enthusiasm: "Now, however, there is a different action of Christ, a different Mystery. I cannot restrain my joy; I have become inspired!"[77] Reminding his listeners in the capital city of his own humble origins, Gregory says that he is like John proclaiming good news, for he—even if not a forerunner—also came from the desert (in Gregory's case, rural Cappadocia).

After a considerable delay in returning to the proper subject of the feast, Gregory focuses on Christ's baptism as celebrated by his assembly. Similar to his opening call to respond to Christ's birth in *Or.* 38, he proclaims, "Christ is full of light: let us shine with him! Christ is baptized: let us go down with him, that we may rise up with him!"[78] He develops three messages for the people's correction from the event of Christ's baptism. The first is for those who go to be baptized without preparing themselves. The second is for those who rebel against the stewards of this mystery, if they themselves attain some special rank. The third is for the youth who presume to teach and hold a position of authority, when Jesus is, himself, cleansed at the age of 30 years. One can imagine the particular needs Gregory considered in his assembly for him to articulate these three points, such as Gregory's displeasure over immature men who rush to be ordained.

Gregory follows this by giving an exegesis of various details in the baptism of Christ by John. For example, John is not worthy to loosen the thong of Christ's sandal (cf. Mark 1: 7). Gregory asks what does this thong mean? He gives an answer particularly appropriate to his own duty of expounding the mysteries of Christ: "Perhaps it is the explanation of his dwelling among us in the flesh, of which even the tip is hard to unravel—not just for those still bound in the flesh, still infants in Christ, but even for those full of the Spirit, as John was!"[79] Of course, it should be recalled that a thong was made from leather, flesh's skin, and Christ's sandal suggests the idea of the Word travelling among us in the flesh.

Gregory teaches for his people's purification five baptisms that in various ways point to the baptism celebrated on this day.[80] The first is the baptism of Moses through the cloud and the sea, a figure which Paul realized (cf. 1 Cor.

[76] The word *exarchos* means "leader" or "beginner." Most scholars now do not interpret it here to mean "beginner," as the one who introduces the feast to Constantinople, but simply "leader."

[77] *Or.* 39.14 (SC 358.178); trans. Daley, 134.

[78] *Or.* 39.14 (SC 358.180); trans. Daley, 134.

[79] *Or.* 39.15 (SC 358.184); trans. Daley, 135–36.

[80] *Or.* 39.17.

10: 1). The second is John's baptism, a baptism that is neither in the "Jewish" fashion nor completely spiritual. The third is the baptism that Jesus gives in the Spirit. Through this baptism, the Spirit is God because, as Gregory tells his listener, by the Spirit you become God (*su ginēi theos*). The fourth baptism occurs in witnessing by the shedding of blood. This baptism, which Christ himself received, is more venerable than all the others, since one cannot be further stained by sin. The fifth baptism, called more laborious, is the baptism of tears. It is the continual grief, which Gregory describes with several scriptural allusions, including a reference to the Canaanite woman who longs like a dog for scraps from the Master's table (cf. Matt. 15: 21–28). Gregory attacks the Novatianists who do not recognize the plurality of baptisms for the forgiveness of sin.[81] In a rhetorical turn, he invites those rigorists to follow the way of Christ, but if they refuse, perhaps in the next world they will be baptized with fire. That is the final baptism, greater and more severe. Thus, those who claim that sins can only be forgiven by one baptism may themselves be baptized for their rigorism (in this sixth baptism) after their deaths.[82]

In his conclusion, Gregory bids his people to honor Christ's baptism this day by repenting from sins and being completely purified. Gregory says that they shall be pure, since God rejoices in nothing more than the correction and salvation of a human being, on whose behalf is all Gregory's speech and all this mystery. Again, Gregory's preaching blends his own *logos* with that of the mystery of the present feast, at the service of God's joy over the human race. All of this, Gregory says, is that "you may become as lights in this world."[83] With this light imagery, Gregory, as the preacher of the feast, closes with reference to the Trinity who has granted a ray of the one divinity in Christ, to whom be the glory for endless ages. And so, this oration prepares the people for the final oration of the set, on Christian baptism itself.

Or. 40, On Baptism

Gregory begins *Or*. 40 by connecting it with the previous oration. He says that on the previous day, his assembly kept a feast on the day of the holy lights, and on this day he gives a discourse on baptism. This oration directly applies the theme of *Or*. 39 to Gregory's listeners. Just as Christ was baptized, so too they

[81] For a pertinent argument against modern-day conservative interpretations of Gregory on salvation, see Donald F. Winslow, "Orthodox Baptism—A Problem for Gregory of Nazianzus," *Studia Patristica* 14 (1976): 371–74.

[82] *Or*. 39.19. Daley notes, "Gregory alludes here to the likelihood of universal salvation or *apokatastasis*, which he seems to have cautiously espoused. See also Orations 3.7 and 40.36." See Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 236 n. 572.

[83] *Or*. 39.20; cf. Phil. 2: 15. Phil. 2: 16 continues, "as you hold on to the word of life, so that my boast for the day of Christ may be that I did not run in vain or labor in vain."

should be baptized, and without delay. Gregory here decries the practice of delaying baptism, although he certainly was not baptized as a child.[84]

After the introduction, Gregory enumerates a plethora of titles for baptism, for just as Christ is called by many names, so too is his gift.[85] Gregory prefers its title of illumination (*phōtismos*), and speaks at length about light.[86] The highest light is God, but the word light (*phōs*) can also be said of the angel, of the human being, and of that created to scatter the darkness.[87] Gregory says that even to those outside the faith, the human being is called *phōs* for two reasons.[88] People name the human *phōs* due to the power of rationality, and some humans are given that title because they are deiform and closer to God. In the subsequent section, Gregory traces the appearances of light through the economy.[89] Gregory sees light: in the first commandment at the time of creation,[90] in the written Law, the burning bush, in the pillar of fire, in Elijah's flaming chariot, around the shepherds when the Eternal Light was mingled with the temporal light, in the star that guided the magi, on the mount of the transfiguration, in the vision of Saul on the road to Damascus, in those purified now, and in the illumination of baptism, "the subject of our present discourse, which encompasses a great and wondrous mystery of our salvation."[91]

By preaching this oration, Gregory aims to convince people to be baptized without delay. Having mentioned the baptism of tears and the severe baptism after death as two kinds of baptism in the previous oration, Gregory now contrasts the baptism that he offers with those two.[92] How many tears, Gregory asks, must it take to equal the fount of baptism? Who is the guarantor

[84] Scholars give various opinions about the timing of his baptism in adulthood. See esp. Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 6, and McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 55. Elm makes the startling remark, "Gregory never mentions his baptism explicitly, and we do not know for certain that he received it." See Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 217.

[85] *Or*. 40.4. One such title is "bath of rebirth." Susanna Elm rejects Gregory's rebirth imagery as "used very rarely," and "plays a truly minimal role." See Elm, "'O Paradoxical Fusion!'," 307 n. 35 and 308 n. 38. For references to birth and rebirth in Gregory's *On Baptism* alone, see *Or*. 40.2, 3, 4, 8, 26, 28, 38, 42, and 44. Elm lists two of these to support her claim of the imagery's paucity.

[86] For Moreschini's discussions on light and purification, see Claudio Moreschini, "Luce e purificazione nella dottrina di Gregorio Nazianzeno," *Augustinianum* 13 (1973): 534–49, and SC 358.62–70.

[87] *Or*. 40.5.

[88] The term *phōs* for the human, and especially the male, is common in Greek poetry, such as in the phrase *isotheos phōs* (a human equal to a god); e.g. Homer, *Iliad* 2.565.

[89] *Or*. 40.6.

[90] The Greek text is: *Φῶς μὲν ἦν καὶ ἡ τῷ πρωτογόνῳ δοθεῖσα πρωτόγονος ἐντολὴ* (*Or*. 40.6 [SC 358.6]). Moreschini's notes and Gallay's French translation in SC 358 do not allude to the command from Gen. 1: 3, "Let there be light," as the first command. Noting Genesis 2: 16–17, Harrison's translation has: "The first precept given to the first-created human being was also a light" (Harrison, 102). However, the Greek text may be giving a pun concerning the first-born commandment of light in reference to the beginning of creation.

[91] *Or*. 40.6 (SC 358.208); trans. Harrison, 103.

[92] *Or*. 40.9.

that death will wait with its fire in the other world? Rather, people should heed Gregory's adaptations of Paul's exhortation and be buried with Christ so as to rise with him, descend with Christ, so as to be exalted with him, and ascend with Christ, so to be glorified with him.[93]

This vivid identification between Christ and the baptized Christian enables the Christian to live Christ's defeat of the devil. Gregory reviews the various temptations of the devil, instructing the faithful to act as Christ did. To understand Gregory's use of the mystery of Christ's baptism for Christian baptism, one must go back to the Gospel itself. In the last temptation, according to Matthew's account, Christ refutes the devil's temptation to worship him by referring to Deut. 6: 13, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him alone shall you serve."[94] In his faith that Jesus is the Lord God, Gregory understands the use of Deuteronomy to be self-referential for Jesus. But Gregory extends the interpretation of this Deuteronomy text one step further. He prepares the faithful for the time when the devil will tempt them, in avarice, to take the kingdoms of the earth if they worship the devil. Gregory instructs the faithful to rely upon the seal of baptism and reply to the devil: "I am also myself an image of God. I have not yet fallen, like you, from the glory on high through seeking elevation. I have put on Christ, I have been transformed into Christ by baptism. You should worship me."[95] Such startling language shows the identification that Gregory draws from baptism in uniting the mysteries of Christ with the Christian life.[96] Put in the simplest and boldest terms, baptism transforms one to be Christ.

Gregory considers the wide range of people he addresses, and shows them how baptism helps them in all the states of life.[97] He speaks to the young and the elderly, urges parents of small children that they, too, should be baptized, even from the time when a child's nails grow, addresses himself to virgins and to the married. For those married, Gregory says that he will imitate Christ, the pure bridal escort and bridegroom (*ton katharon nymphagōgon kai nymphion*), who works a miracle at a wedding and honors marriage by his

[93] *Or*. 40.9; cf. Rom. 6: 4, Col. 2: 12, Eph. 2: 6, and Rom. 8: 17. Elm notes, "Gregory does use very little Pauline baptismal language." See Elm, "'O Paradoxical Fusion!'," 302 n. 16. I disagree; Pauline references run throughout this oration, such as in putting on Christ and union with Christ's mysteries. For a study on the baptismal practice of Christians, including some Fathers of the fourth century, based on Rom. 6: 3–11, see Maxwell E. Johnson's chap. 1, "Baptism as Participation in the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Christ," in Johnson, *Images of Baptism*, Forum Essays 6 (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2001), 1–31.

[94] Matt. 4: 10.

[95] *Or*. 40.10 (SC 358.218); trans. Harrison, 106. For more examples of exhortations against the devil, see *Or*. 40.34–35.

[96] Winslow claims, "[I]n his [Gregory's] concept of *theōsis* we can find no trace of any failure to render to the Creator sole honor and praise." See Winslow, *The Dynamics of Salvation*, 183. Rather than a failure, this example of baptism suggests how Gregory views God's generous sharing in divine characteristics.

[97] *Or*. 40.17.

presence there.[98] Gregory proposes baptism for those in authority and those in slavery, for the discouraged and the cheerful, for the poor and the wealthy. In short, he encourages baptism for everyone.

Gregory gives special honor to the poor in the Christology of this oration. In one place, he first draws attention to the divine generosity: "Offer yourself, clothe yourself with Christ, feed me by your way of life; thus I rejoice to be entertained, and thus also does God, who gives the greatest gifts."[99] These gifts are given even to the poor, for God does not distinguish between poor and rich here—with one exception: those who are more eager, are counted as the richer. Gregory also bids the rich not to disdain being baptized with the poor, by turning to the example of Christ. Gregory says, "You are not yet humbling yourself as much as Christ, into whom you are baptized today, who for your sake even accepted 'the form of a slave.'"[100] Gregory continues that Christ has placed himself upon all in that single form.

In his lengthy exhortation not to delay baptism, Gregory frequently puts his people in a composition of place in the Gospel. This includes exhorting the faithful to be like Peter and John. Just as they raced to the tomb, so we can race to the font to be the first to obtain the blessing of baptism.[101] Gregory also counts blessed the one from whom Jesus asks for a drink, as he did from the Samaritan woman, for she will be given a well of water springing up into eternal life.[102] In one section, he tells his listeners that they are various persons saved by Jesus, with a contrast between the pitiable state of "yesterday," and the healed state of "today."[103] The scriptural images include: the woman healed from the hemorrhage, the paralytic lifted up near the pool of Bethsaida, and Lazarus raised from the dead. They can imitate the lepers who are to show their cure to the priest (now Gregory himself), and especially the Samaritan leper who thanked Jesus for his healing. Until yesterday, their hand was withered from avarice; now, it stretches out to feed the needy for the sake of Christ. If deaf and mute, they can have the Word sound in their ears. If blind, they can have their eyes enlightened by God's light. Gregory says, "If you receive within you the whole Word, you will gather to your own soul all of Christ's cures, by which he has cured each individually."[104]

[98] *Or*. 40.18 (SC 358.236); cf. Eph. 5: 23–27; 2 Cor. 11: 2; John 3: 29; and John 2: 1–11. The term *nymphagōgos* is reminiscent of Clement's pedagogy where Christ the *paidagōgos* leads to Christ the *didaskalos*. See Clement's *Paedagogus* 1.1–1.3. Is Gregory suggesting something similar in having Christ the *nymphagōgos* lead to Christ the *nymphios*? In *Or*. 38.14 (= *Or*. 45.26), Gregory calls John the Baptist the *nymphagōgos*, which would be more expected, given John 3: 29. He applies the same term to the role that he has undertaken as a priest in *Or*. 2.77.

[99] *Or*. 40.25 (SC 358.254); trans. Harrison, 120); cf. Rom. 13: 14. Note how both Gregory and God rejoice over the people's action of putting on Christ.

[100] *Or*. 40.27 (SC 358.258); trans. Harrison, 122; cf. Phil. 2: 7.

[101] *Or*. 40.25; cf. John 20: 3.

[102] *Or*. 40.27; cf. John 4: 14.

[103] *Or*. 40.33.

[104] *Or*. 40.34 (SC 358.276); trans. Harrison, 130.

The completeness of the identification of the baptized with Christ's mysteries appears also in Gregory's detailing of the transformation of every sense.[105] Gregory urges, first, the enlightening of the eyes. In this, he alludes to Matt. 7: 2 and speaks about the purging of beams and motes. Then he speaks of illuminating the ears and the tongue, focusing on how to hear the Lord, and speak the Lord's wisdom. As for the sense of smell, Gregory wants the assembly to avoid effeminacy and to smell, instead, the ointment poured out, so that a fragrant odor may, in turn, be smelled from them. Dealing with touch, Gregory mentions the example of the apostle Thomas from John 20: 28. As for the fifth sense, Gregory bids that their taste be cleansed, so that he and his listeners can taste and know that the Lord is good. The throat should be filled with the words that are sweeter than honey.

Gregory continues describing this complete transformation, going through the members of the body.[106] This may very well mirror the practice of anointing parts of the body in the baptismal process.[107] He begins with the head, so as to focus attention on the head of Christ. The shoulder is to be purified to take up Christ's cross, which is not easily taken up by all. Gregory then urges that the hands and the feet be consecrated. The hands may lay hold of the discipline of Christ, while the feet may be prompt to run, to receive Christ who washes them, alluding to John 13: 1–20. Gregory also bids the sanctification of the heart and the inward parts. Following 1 Cor. 12: 13, he gives more honor to the uncomely parts and speaks of the purification of the loins. At the end of this section, Gregory contrasts the animal sacrifices that extracted only certain parts, such as the lobe of the liver or the shoulder, with the holocaust of baptism. He exhorts everyone to give themselves wholly, becoming rational holocausts, perfect sacrifices.

From her interest in inscriptions, Elm draws special attention to *Or*. 40.44, which culminates the Epiphany celebrations. Gregory preaches: "What need do I have for longer speeches? For it is the time for teachings, not controversies. 'I testify before God and the elect angels,' that you must be baptized with this faith." Gregory preaches this faith, a faith that is written upon the souls of his hearers. "If anyone has written in you in a way other than my discourse demands," Gregory says, "come and have the writing changed. I am not without talent as a calligrapher of these things, writing what has been written

[105] *Or*. 40.38. [106] *Or*. 40.38.

[107] Thomas Finn discusses the significance of the pre-baptismal anointing of the body and no post-baptismal anointing in the mainstream of the Syrian baptismal tradition and in the witness of Proclus to the early fifth-century rite in Constantinople. Although Finn does not comment on Gregory's *Or*. 40.38, the description of purification there fits into Finn's argument that the pre-baptismal anointing in Syria and Constantinople is exorcismal, and not conferring the gift of the Holy Spirit. See Thomas M. Finn, C.S.P., *The Liturgy of Baptism in the Baptismal Instructions of St. John Chrysostom*, Catholic University of America Studies in Christian Antiquity, no. 15 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1967), 119–46.

in me and teaching what I have been taught and have kept from the beginning to these gray hairs." Gregory hands on what he himself has received. His autobiographical Christology shows forth what Christ looks like in his own life, so as to impart Christ to those he baptizes. He emphasizes his role in this transmission of the faith: "Mine is the danger, mine also the privilege as the director of your soul and the one who perfects you through baptism."[108]

In *Or*. 40.45, Gregory continues with this imagery of writing: "Give me the tablets of your heart. I am becoming Moses for you, even if it is bold to say it. I am inscribing with the finger of God a new Decalogue; I am inscribing a concise salvation."[109] Gregory traces the doctrine of the economy for those to be baptized, beginning with creation and providence. Not surprisingly, he emphasizes the mysteries of Christ.[110] In the Incarnation, Gregory formulates the mystery of the one born of the Virgin Mary, ineffably and without stain:

> He is a whole human being, and the same is also God, on behalf of the whole sufferer, that salvation may be granted to the whole of you, destroying the whole condemnation of sin. He is impassible in his divinity, passible in what he has assumed. He is as much human because of you as you may become God because of him.[111]

Gregory relates the mysteries of Christ's crucifixion on account of our iniquities, his burial, his resurrection in a more deiform body, his ascension, return in glory, and judgment of the living and the dead, and the reward he promises for the deeds done. All of these mysteries are to be professed in the creed before the baptism; other mysteries will be disclosed after they receive the sacrament.

Gregory concludes this oration by evoking an eschatological fulfillment of baptism in our meeting with Christ the Bridegroom. He says that, after their baptism, the candidates will stand before the Great Sanctuary as a prefiguration of the future glory. The psalmody in the baptismal liturgy points to heaven's psalmody, and the lamps kindled at the baptism symbolize how the souls will meet the Bridegroom with the lamps of faith shining. Here we find an interesting variation in what Gregory may have borrowed from Basil's brief protreptic on baptism, which draws to a close with the example of the parable of the ten virgins (cf. Matt. 25: 1–13).[112] Basil solely mentions the negative model of the foolish virgins. Gregory, on the other hand, preaches that the

[108] *Or*. 40.44 (SC 358.44–46); trans. Harrison, 139; cf. 1 Tim. 5: 21.

[109] *Or*. 40.45 (SC 358.304); trans. Harrison, 140 (alt.).

[110] Gregory does not explicitly discuss the Holy Spirit's work in this passage.

[111] *Or*. 40.45 (SC 358.306); trans. Harrison, 140–41 (alt.). Cf. the similar formulation of deification in the first person, rather than the second person, in *Or*. 29.19.

[112] Basil, *Hom*. 13, *Exhortation to Baptism*, 7. Gregory borrowed a number of ideas and scriptural passages from this text. For a relevant study of our Gregory, Basil, and Gregory of Nyssa, see Everett Ferguson, "Exhortations to Baptism in the Cappadocians," *Studia Patristica* 32 (1997): 121–29. For Gregory's connections with Clement of Alexandria and Origen on baptism,

baptized will be those with bright and virginal souls who will meet the Bridegroom, while the foolish non-baptized will have no share in heaven's bridal chamber. The mysteries of Christ are fulfilled only in the consummation of heaven's wedding feast.[113] And whose marriage is it? The souls are not merely wedding attendants; Gregory twice says that the Bridegroom will be joined to souls. The Bridegroom will be joined to the souls that have come to him "in teaching them things most perfect and most pure. May we also, who teach these things and who learn them, have a share in them," says Gregory, "in the same Christ our Lord, to whom be glory unto the ages. Amen."[114]

This conclusion holds paramount importance for interpreting *Or*. 38–40. As will be recalled, the beginning of *Or*. 38 announced: "Christ is born—give praise! Christ comes from heaven—rise up to meet him! Christ is on earth—be lifted up!" *Or*. 40's ending suggests that the people have, indeed, been lifted up by Gregory's preaching, having gone out to meet the Bridegroom like the prudent virgins, ready to praise him in heaven. Fittingly, Gregory gives in this set of orations, as his final image for the joining of Christ with Christian souls, that closest of blends between human persons, the *mixis* of husband and wife. These three *Festal Orations* thus communicate Gregory's source of pastoral leadership guiding his people, baptized into Christ, through the mysteries of Christ, from his birth to the glory of the everlasting wedding feast. They will enjoy that glory for themselves after they, like Gregory himself, have put on Christ and have their whole lives blended with the Lord.

THE STONINGS

Between the Epiphany mysteries and Paschal mysteries lies the great expanse of actions in Jesus' public ministry, recorded in the Gospel accounts. Of course, Gregory cannot resist discussing many of these mysteries, in *Festal Orations* dedicated to other mysteries or in additional writings dedicated to other themes. For example, Philippe Molac makes the case that Christ's transfiguration holds a central place in Gregory's spirituality (and yet that mystery does not form the main subject of any of his texts).[115] Also, we have touched upon several aspects of Gregory's blend of his life with the actions of

see Ferguson, "Gregory's Baptismal Theology and the Alexandrian Tradition," in *Re-reading Gregory of Nazianzus*, ed. Christopher A. Beeley, 67–83.

[113] Gregory presses the wedding feast imagery further by referring to the parables of Luke 14: 15–24 and Matt 22: 1–14. Cf. the first-person account in *Carm*. 1.1.27.43–66.

[114] *Or*. 40.46 (SC 358.310); trans. Harrison, 142 (alt.).

[115] Molac maintains that even though the transfiguration is not the most frequently mentioned episode for Gregory in Christ's life, it lies at the heart of Gregory's biblical reading. Moreover, Gregory frequently addresses themes common to the transfiguration, such as light.

Christ's ministry when considering the poetry of Gregory's Christomorphic autobiography, such as the healing that Gregory experiences directly from Christ, as if Gregory were "next in line" after the Gospel characters who meet Jesus and experience miracles.

We now study in depth Gregory's interpretations of Christ's stoning and his own.[116] In both cases, Gregory ascribes greater importance to the incident than what one might initially expect. Gregory's stoning by angry anti-Nicene monks at the 380 Easter Vigil was not the only suffering, or near fatality, in his life. For instance, he elsewhere tells us that a man coming to murder him clung to him on his sickbed, and cried in remorse for what he was going to do.[117] Yet, that incident does not capture Gregory's imagination as does the stoning. In an epitaph and summary of his life, Gregory marks out ten significant aspects of his life. The last line is: "I have been struck, tenth, by stones and even by friends."[118] Gregory similarly finds that the stoning was one of the most significant mysteries of Christ's life. Recall that in John 8: 58–59 and 10: 30–39, Christ is threatened with stones after his claim of "I am" and his statement that "the Father and I are one." These fleeting references may be overlooked by some who concentrate on far more prominent matters concerning Christ's public ministry before his Passion in the four Gospel accounts. But this is not so for Gregory, who finds it to be of the utmost importance.[119]

In *Or*. 41, *On Pentecost*, Gregory runs through the mysteries of Christ's life. The only mystery mentioned between Christ's tempting at the beginning of the public ministry and his betrayal at its end is the stoning. Gregory says, "stoned for our sake—by which he had to be given as a model of suffering on behalf of the word."[120] As we have seen, Gregory gives a similar list of Christ's actions in *Or*. 38, *On the Theophany*. There, he mentions the stoning as the only event between Christ's two actions of teaching in the Temple at the age of 12 and driving out the moneychangers from the Temple as an adult, and, at the other end of the Gospel, Christ's appearance before Herod in the Passion. Gregory bids his listener to imitate Christ: "Be stoned, if this is what you must suffer—you will give the slip to those who cast stones at you, I am sure, and will escape through the midst of them as God did [*or*: as a god, ὡς Θεός]; for

See Philippe Molac, *Douleur et transfiguration: Une lecture du cheminement spirituel de saint Grégoire de Nazianze* (Paris: Cerf, 2006), esp. pp. 247–65 and 447.

[116] For a brief treatment of the stonings with some references, see McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 257–58. Some of my treatment here can also be found in Andrew Hofer, O.P., "The Stoning of Christ and Gregory of Nazianzus," in *Re-reading Gregory of Nazianzus*, ed. Christopher A. Beeley, 143–58.

[117] *De vita sua* 1441–74.

[118] *Carm*. 2.1.93.10 (PG 37.1148); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 469.

[119] For Gregory's expressed lack of interest in the stones celebrated by pagans, see *Carm*. 2.1.34.74, analyzed in Demoen, "The Attitude towards Greek Poetry in the Verse of Gregory Nazianzen," 241.

[120] *Or*. 41.5 (SC 358.324); trans. Harrison, 148.

the Word cannot be touched by stones!"[121] Notice that, in both of these festal orations, Gregory speaks of Christ's stoning as an example of suffering.

Christ's stoning also appears twice in the *Theological Orations*. The first time comes in Oration 29's long series of examples of partitive exegesis, that first ascribes activities to Christ as human and then activities to Christ as God. It begins an analysis of the mysteries with Christ's baptism: as human he was baptized, but as God he absolved sins. Gregory later says, "he is stoned, but not hit."[122] This idea of not being hit, precisely because of being God, reappears at the beginning of *Or*. 31. Looking back at the previous two orations, Gregory begins the last of the *Theological Orations* with "So stands the doctrine of the Son. It has passed through the midst of its adversaries unscathed by their stones. The Word cannot be stoned."[123]

Christ's stoning seen within an explicitly doctrinal context also appears in *Or*. 37. Gregory writes that Christ suffers stoning, not only at the hands of his enemies, but even by those who seem to reverence him.[124] How so? If one speaks incorrectly of Christ, using corporeal names to describe the incorporeal, then one throws stones at the Savior. Gregory, for his part, says that he does not willingly stone him, and launches into a Christological praise that both affirms titles for Christ, and exalts him above all titles. Finishing this confession to Christ, Gregory receives the abuse meant for his Lord. Gregory exclaims, "Again I set the tongues to move; again some rage against Christ, or rather against me, as I have been deemed worthy to be a herald of the Word."[125] Gregory's sufferings, including the stoning which he receives as a consequence of his preaching, are framed within his awareness of being blended with the God who suffered for him. Identifying Christ's divinity and his own humanity in the same oration, Gregory says, "For why is the Christian held in honor? Is it not that Christ is God? Even though I love him as human, I am mingled together with him by friendship."[126]

How does Gregory's conformity to Christ in the stoning express itself in Gregory's virtue? The most recurring emphasis seems to be his merciful patience. The longest single description of the stoning comes from Gregory's *Ep*. 77, to Theodore of Tyana. Gregory gives vivid details about how he stood between the monks throwing the stones and those receiving the sacraments at the Vigil. But the point of the letter is to calm Theodore's indignation by an appeal to divine mercy. He situates the incident within a string of scriptural

[121] *Or*. 38.18 (SC 358.146); trans. Daley, 126 (alt.).
[122] *Or*. 29.20 (SC 250.220); trans. Williams and Wickham, 87.
[123] *Or*. 31.1 (SC 250.276); trans. Williams and Wickham, 117. Gregory continues with an allusion to Exod. 19: 13 concerning the punishment of stoning, which Gregory interprets to mean that unworthy arguments are the wild beasts stoned by the Word.
[124] *Or*. 37.4.
[125] *Or*. 37.4 (SC 318.280); trans. Browne and Swallow, 339.
[126] *Or*. 37.17 (SC 318.306).

examples that show mercy, rather than retribution, to be more laudatory. He says, "Let us imitate the *philanthrōpia* of God," and highlights the example of Christ's words about how a fig tree could still bear fruit through more gardening.[127]

One finds this Christological conformity in merciful patience repeatedly in Gregory's literary fashioning of his stoning. In his *Farewell to the Bishops*, whose ending bids his audience to remember his stoning and receive the grace of Christ, Gregory speaks of those who make war on the Godhead, and says that he does not pelt his enemies with insults. Rather, "we try to show that fighting the war on Christ's behalf consists in fighting as Christ did—the meek one, the peacemaker, who sustains our weakness."[128] Both past and present are seen through a Christological lens in Gregory's account of the war he wages. Christ is not only the one who acted peacefully, but also the one who sustains Gregory's weakness in the midst of this fight fought on Christ's behalf.

In his *De vita sua*, Gregory makes light of his stonings, calling them his "banquet." He says that he has only one criticism: the aim was poor.[129] More seriously, it seems that just as the Word, because he is God, cannot be stoned, so, too, the stones missed Gregory who, in a vivid way, shares Christ's identity. Gregory, in this section of the *De vita sua*, calls himself a disciple of the Word, and says that he has done no wrong. Such a remark means something other than simple self-righteousness. It can remind us of Christ's own reaction when stones are picked up to be hurled at him. Christ says, "I have shown you many good works from my Father. For which of these are you trying to stone me?" (John 10: 32). Gregory says that, while others charged him, Christ stood beside him, to defend him—Christ, who helps those who stand up for his words.[130]

In his poem *Concerning himself and the bishops*, Gregory begins by recalling that he models himself after the commandments of him who suffered and bore with ill-use. Gregory finds, on the other hand, that he should not keep silent as was Christ so that the wicked should not triumph. He lashes out at those he considers to be his assassins, saying such things as: "Let everyone throw at me, because long ago I have become inured to stonings."[131] The Christological connection becomes more explicit the second time it appears in this poem. Again, Gregory professes his innocence, and says that the only weakness he showed was that he "spared those evil men at whose hands I endured stoning at the very outset. When subjected to the same sufferings as Christ, it seemed the more religious thing to emulate his patience."[132]

[127] *Ep.* 77.12 (Gallay, *Lettres* 1.97); trans. Browne and Swallow, 472 (alt.). The term *philanthrōpia* came to have special poignancy in reference to the Incarnation, cf. Tit. 3: 4.
[128] *Or.* 42.13 (SC 384.78); trans. Daley, 146.
[129] *De vita sua* 665–67.
[130] *De vita sua* 673–74.
[131] *Carm.* 2.1.12.32–33 (PG 37.1168); trans. Meehan, 50 (alt.).
[132] *Carm.* 2.1.12.104–6 (PG 37.1173–74); trans. Meehan, 52 (alt.).

This non-retaliatory imitation of Christ's patience also appears in an acrostic poem of iambic trimeter, the first letters of whose first fifteen lines spell "Of Gregory the Priest."[133] Gregory speaks of how evil men attacked him. He says, "I was held by stones on either side, imitating the Savior, the keystone."[134] Later in this same acrostic poem, he speaks directly to Christ: "Christ, I dare to say some of what is in my heart. They abuse with challenges and my stones."[135] Here, Gregory imagines himself to be the unwavering mark of truth by defending the Holy Spirit's equal divinity.

Examples of Christ's stoning and Gregory's stoning could continue, as Gregory mentions these stonings over twenty times in his works.[136] But already sufficient evidence has been reviewed to make a couple of connections. First, in Gregory's intertexuality, perhaps the centerpiece is left implicit. How so? Gregory habitually alludes to scriptural texts and offers other pregnant turns of phrase. Frances Young reminds her readers that, in his use of the Scriptures, Gregory would have been familiar with the idea of Menander who says, "You should not . . . quote the whole passage, since it is generally familiar and well known, but adapt it."[137] In mentioning both Christ's stoning and his own, Gregory certainly emphasizes the significance of defending the Trinity by affirming both Christ's divinity and the Holy Spirit's. But could it be that by frequent recourse to Christ's stoning alongside his own, Gregory draws attention—by his silence—to the phrase in Ps. 82: 6 "You are gods," quoted in John 10: 34? This verse, of all the Scriptures, stands arguably as the most influential for the development of reflection on deification before the fifth century, and yet, Gregory, who often speaks of becoming gods, never offers a direct quotation of the verse.[138] Gregory's call for people to remember his stoning identifies him with Christ, who, in these Gospel passages reveals his divinity,

[133] *Carm*. 2.1.14, "On Himself and against the Envious, an Acrostic." Abrams Rebillard finds a parallel between Christ and Gregory in the *parrhesia* of this poem. See Suzanne Abrams Rebillard, "The Poetic *Parrhesia* of Gregory of Nazianzus," *Studia Patristica* 41 (2006): 273–78, at pp. 274–76.

[134] *Carm*. 2.1.14.14–15 (PG 37.1246); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 258.

[135] *Carm*. 1.1.14.31–32 (PG 37.1247); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 259.

[136] See the examples of *Or*. 23.5; 29.20; 31.1; 33.1 and 13; 37.4; 38.18; 41.5; 42.27; *Ep*. 77; 95; *Carm*. 2.1.11.665–67; 2.1.12.33 and 103; 2.1.14.31–38; 2.1.15.7–12; 2.1.17.47–48; 2.1.19.13–16; 2.1.30.54–56 and 123–28; 2.1.33.12; 2.1.59.3–7; and 2.1.93.10.

[137] Menander, Consolatory Speech, Treatise, 2.9.413.25ff. in *Menander Rhetor*, eds. and trans. D. A. Russell and N. G. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon: Press, 1981), 162; cf. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*, 103.

[138] The *Biblia Patristica* references yield only a few allusions: cf. *Ep*. 178 and *Or*. 1.5; 14.23; 33.15; and 36.11. In his study on the Cappadocian approach to deification, Norman Russell notes that Gregory never quotes 2 Pet. 1: 4 (which became more popular for the theology of deification after Gregory), but Russell mentions Ps. 82: 6 obliquely. Russell comments on *Or*. 7.23: "In this passage, which concludes a meditation on the Pauline theme of putting to death the 'earthly members' (Col 3: 5), the Irenaean interpretation of the gods of Psalm 82: 6 as those made sons of God through baptism is not far below the surface." See Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, 217.

professes his innocence, is patient and merciful, enacts what was previously written in the Scriptures, and points to the deification of others. In short, this evangelical description of Christ hints at what Gregory seeks to be in his own life.

The second point in this connection reinforces an argument made by Frederick Norris, on Gregory contemplating the beautiful, through both human misery and divine mystery. Norris writes:

> The need for contemplation of God led to a vision of knowing and persuading through images, a demand that theology be marked by suggestive imagination rather than analytic subtlety. Or perhaps more precisely, employing analytic subtlety as the expected method in the search for the nature of God, and thus discovering its inadequacy, led to the choice of compelling images as the way to approach the unapproachable.[139]

Gregory's poetic contemplation of God's reality through biblical images can lead us from the suffering we experience to the One who comes down to be with us in our suffering. The cross is certainly the most compelling New Testament image, combining human misery and divine mystery in a call to draw us towards conformity to Christ. However, no one after Christ was recorded in the New Testament as literally crucified, and death on the cross was not a threat in Gregory's day. This differs markedly from the image of stoning, which we continue to see in the New Testament, not only for the death of Stephen, the first martyr, but also in the sufferings of the Apostle Paul.[140] Moreover, Gregory records in *Or*. 33 how just "yesterday," Arians greeted an old man, who had just returned from exile, with stones in the middle of the day and in the middle of the city.[141] Stonings were, therefore, in the Scriptures and in the news. For those familiar with biblical allusions, and even with the real threat of stoning in life, this potent image could be read to unite not only Gregory, but also Gregory's audience, to Christ.

To be sure, Gregory commingles the life of Christ with his own for a pastoral purpose. Through Gregory's life, Christian readers are invited to see the life of Christ himself and are summoned to take Gregory's side, which is the side of Christ, and be divinized like Gregory. They, too, can live out the verses of Scripture in complete baptismal conformity with the Savior. In this model bishop's own closing words in *The Farewell Address*: "Children, for my

[139] Norris, "Gregory Contemplating the Beautiful," 20–21.

[140] Cf. Acts 7: 54–8: 1 and 14: 19; and 2 Cor. 11: 25. Also, cf. Exod 17: 4 and Num 14: 10.

[141] *Or*. 33.5. Moreschini follows Elias of Crete and sees that this remark refers to the murder of Eusebius of Samosata. Gregory addressed *Ep*. 42, 44, 64, 65, and 66 to Eusebius, whom he highly esteemed. See SC 318:168–169 n. 2. Gregory himself immediately emphasizes how "we" forgive those who are the perpetrators, and in *Or*. 33.13 quotes Stephen's prayer from Acts 7: 60 following the first martyr's stoning.

sake 'guard what has been entrusted to you;' remember my stoning! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all! Amen."[142]

THE PASCHAL MYSTERIES

The labeling of Gregory's Christology as "traditional," or as primarily responding to heretical threats, does not do justice to the many traditions at the disposal of a writer in the late fourth century. For example, Dragoș-Andrei Giulea has argued that both our Gregory and Gregory of Nyssa expound a "Paschal Christology" that incorporates seven terminological categories and traditions: Glory-Christology; Image-Christology; Anthropos-and-Polymorphic Christology; Pneuma-Sarx-Christology, Christology of Mélange, Demiurge/Creator Christology; and Eikonic-Soteriology.[143] Gregory's autobiographical Christology makes a distinctive signature upon what he has received. His treatment of the Paschal mysteries provides an excellent example.

Gregory loves to speak about Christ nailing "my sin" to the cross. In his first invective against Julian, when he contrasts Christ's humility with the foolishness of the gods, Gregory says that the Savior and Lord of all "had not merely come down into 'the form of a servant,' but had also gone up to the cross carrying with him my sin, to die there."[144] When preaching in praise of the martyr Cyprian, Gregory speaks of "the very passion of Christ, the first martyr, who gathered me to himself as he mounted the cross that he might crucify my sin and triumph over the serpent and sanctify the tree and vanquish pleasure and redeem Adam and restore our fallen image."[145] In his panegyric on Basil, Gregory defends Basil against his critics by directing attention toward Basil's Christ-like humility:

> to know Christ, who lowered himself to 'the form of a servant,' who ate with publicans and washed the feet of his disciples, who did not disdain the cross that he might crucify my sin to it—although nothing is more wonderful than this, to see God crucified, in the company of thieves and mocked by passersby, him who was invincible and beyond all suffering.[146]

[142] *Or*. 42.27 (SC 384.114); trans. Daley, 154.

[143] Dragoș-Andrei Giulea, "The Cappadocian Paschal Christology: Gregory Nazianzen and Gregory of Nyssa on the Divine Paschal Image of Christ," *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 12 (2008): 477–503.

[144] *Or*. 4.78 (SC 309.200); trans. King, 49 (alt.); cf. Phil. 2: 7.

[145] *Or*. 24.4 (SC 284.46); trans. Vinson, 144.

[146] *Or*. 43.64 (SC 384.266); trans. McCauley, 82 (alt.). For yet another example of Christ's cross and "my sin," see *Or*. 38.16 analyzed earlier in this chapter.

Although Gregory shapes each of these different presentations according to the rhetorical needs of the occasion, he remains consistent in announcing the abolition of "my sin."

These examples obviously focus our attention on the cross, which Donald Winslow considers to be, for Gregory, "the culmination and fulfillment of the *oikonomia* of the incarnation. It is the prime instrument of salvation."[147] Gregory himself certainly emphasizes Christ's cross, but not necessarily to lessen the significance of the resurrection. He frequently places the cross within a wider consideration of the glorious resurrection, not to mention Christ's descent in the Incarnation in the first place.[148] Rather than isolating any mystery, even the cross, he often gives a series of mysteries to suggest their interconnections, or groups them in pairs, such as the Incarnation and the cross, or the cross and the resurrection. In fact, as Giulea rightly argues, Gregory places the Pascha within the widest ranging framework possible: the whole history of salvation from the creation of the world to the eschatological recreation of the human being.[149] Within this greatest of all plans, Gregory finds personal salvation for himself and his people in Christ's death and resurrection. To follow Gregory in his distinctive autobiographical Christology on the Pascha, we now look at his *Or.* 45 in some detail.[150]

Or. 45, On the Pascha

The proemium of *Or.* 45 casts Gregory's role as the Word's herald with remarkable imagery. Gregory begins with the prophet Habakkuk stating: "I will stand my watch."[151] Gregory joins the prophet, claiming authority and a vision given by the Spirit. Gregory then describes his vision: a very exalted man upon the clouds with an appearance like that of an angel, with clothing as

[147] Winslow, *The Dynamics of Salvation*, 99. Also, John Behr finds it of greatest importance to focus Gregory's soteriology on the cross. While treating Gregory, Behr gives this assessment of what Apollinarius did: "The crux of Christ's work, and of understanding his identity, has shifted from his Passion to the new being and mode of life that he, as a heavenly redeemer, has brought into this world." See Behr, *The Nicene Faith*, 401.

[148] Winslow's insistence on the cross, in contradistinction to the resurrection, sounds like it is importing a later concern on to Gregory's thinking. Gregory will, at times, show that something in the Christian celebration of Christ's mysteries is greater than another, as he does for the Easter Day's precedence over the Easter Vigil in *Or.* 45.2. But what could be greater than the resurrection itself?

[149] Giulea, "The Cappadocian Paschal Christology," 478–79.

[150] Although it does have passages borrowed from *Or.* 38 which will be noted and passed over, it may be misleading to call *Or.* 45 a "re-edition of *Oration* 38," the succinct description in McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 405. Most obviously, Gregory fits the used material to support his proper celebration of the feast of Pascha, not the Theophany.

[151] Hab. 2: 1. The prophet is then commanded by the Lord to write down the vision upon tablets clearly so that it can be read.

bright as lightning, lifting his hand to the east and crying out with a voice like the sound of a trumpet. Gregory links this pronouncement with that of glory and peace, heard by the shepherds of Bethlehem in Luke 2: 24. Surrounded by a multitude of the heavenly host, the man said:

> Today salvation has come to the world, to things visible and to things invisible. Christ is risen from the dead; rise with him. Christ has returned to himself; return. Christ is freed from the tomb; be freed from the bonds of sin. The gates of hades are opened, and death is destroyed, and the old Adam is put aside, and the new is fulfilled. If anyone in Christ is a new creation, be made new.[152]

What is the meaning of this vision, and how does it function in Gregory's oration?[153] It can be compared with the references to heavenly figures in the scriptural accounts of the Lord's resurrection. The four canonical Gospels record angelic pronouncements on Easter Sunday, and other early Christian accounts embellish details.[154] Although Gregory does not explicitly name the Book of Revelation among the canonical books, he casts himself as a visionary like John: "I was caught up in spirit on the Lord's day and heard behind me a voice as loud as a trumpet" (Rev. 1: 10).[155] This first chapter of Revelation communicates additional elements found at the beginning of this oration: clouds, a vision of "one like a son of man" with tremendous brightness, proclamation of God's word, testimony to Jesus, the announcement of one who was once dead but now lives forever and ever.[156] Like the angels giving praise in song at the Christmas proclamation and this Easter proclamation, Gregory wishes for an angelic voice so that his message would resound to the ends of the world.[157] Clearly, then, Gregory seeks to imitate the one he saw in

[152] *Or*. 45.1 (PG 36.624A–B); trans. Harrison, 161. Bernardi notes the similarity in structure between these lines and the first words of *Or*. 38.1. See Bernardi, *La Prédication des Pères Cappadociens*, 247.

[153] Frances Young writes, "Gregory's second Easter Oration is both larger in scope and more typical than the first. The opening summons to festivity is couched in scriptural language, with an explicit quotation from Habakkuk, and allusions compounded from all over the Bible conjuring up the vision of one riding on the clouds with the heavenly host announcing salvation: Christ is risen from the dead." See Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*, 112.

[154] E.g., *The Gospel of Peter* 9.35–13.57, which has two figures in great brightness descend from heaven to the tomb and three come out of the tomb, with the cross following. The cross answers "yes" to heaven's question about preaching to those asleep.

[155] For Gregory's scriptural canon, see *Carm*. 1.1.12. Gregory's description in *Carm*. 1.1.12 of John the Evangelist as an "entrant of heaven" may suggest a canonical inclusion of the Apocalypse. See Frank Thielman, "The Place of the Apocalypse in the Canon of St. Gregory Nazianzen," *Tyndale Bulletin* 49 (1998): 155–57. Discussing how Gregory uses books that he does not consider canonical, Gallay says that Gregory's orations have fourteen citations from the Book of Revelation, including an explicit naming of Revelation in *Or*. 42.9. See Gallay, "La Bible dans l'oeuvre de Grégoire de Nazianze le théologien," 317.

[156] Also, further comparisons could be drawn to the Book of Daniel and other apocalyptic materials, as Gregory is drawing upon images common to that genre.

[157] *Or*. 45.1.

the vision and to be, himself, that great herald, not only of the resurrection, but also of our response to the resurrection: "Christ is risen from the dead; rise with him."[158]

Gregory rejoices in the name Pascha, immediately after expressing his desire to spread the good news throughout the cosmos.[159] In introducing the celebration, Gregory explains that Pascha is the feast of feasts, surpassing other mysteries of Christ as the sun is above the stars.[160] This Sunday celebration exceeds the preceding vigil, as the resurrection is celebrated in glory, whereas, the night before, it was pre-festal gladness. Since Gregory knows that all must bring their best gifts, he offers his discourse (*logos*). Gregory will continue by calling God to mind, and he repeats catechetical material from *Or*. 38, *On the Theophany*.[161] But before he does so, he bids his audience to purify for him, their mind, hearing, and reasoning.[162]

After the lengthy catechesis from *Or*. 38, Gregory gives evidence that he has learned from Origen's *Treatise on the Passover*.[163] He starts with Pascha's etymology, which is how Origen began his treatise. Origen altered previous Christian interpretations of Pascha by going back to the Hebrew and finding that the Hebrew word does not mean suffering, as in the Greek *pathos*, "passion," or *paschein*, "to suffer," but, rather, a "passage" with the Greek equivalent of *diabasis*.[164] Following Origen, Gregory makes the same distinction, but in a somewhat different manner. Gregory speaks of both a historical

[158] One recent interpretation says: "Who, then, is the angel? Whatever it is, the angel offers an image of what the human herald of the Good News should be . . . . If it were not that the angel points to Christ as someone else than itself, we might assume that it was Christ himself appearing as an angel." See Bogdan G. Bucur and Elijah N. Mueller, "Gregory Nazianzen's Reading of Habakkuk 3: 2 and Its Reception: A Lesson from Byzantine Scripture Exegesis," *Pro Ecclesia* 20 (2011): 86–103, at p. 102.

[159] *Or*. 45. 2; cf. *Or*. 45.30 where he speaks directly to Pascha as if to Christ himself.

[160] Raniero Cantalamessa writes, "There was a time in the life of the Church when Easter was, in a way, everything—not only because it commemorated the whole history of salvation from the creation to the parousia, without having to share it with any other festival, but also because certain essential elements of the community's life took shape in the course of its celebrating Easter over the years: the liturgy, for instance, but also typological exegesis, catechesis, theology, and even some of the canonical Scriptures." See Raniero Cantalamessa, O.F.M. Cap., *Easter in the Early Church: An Anthology of Jewish and Christian Texts*, rev. and augmented by the author, trans. James M. Quigley, S.J., and Joseph T. Lienhard, S.J. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993), 1.

[161] *Or*. 38.7–13; cf. *Or*. 45.3–9.

[162] *Or*. 45.2.

[163] *Or*. 45.10; cf. *Or*. 38.10. Gallay and Harrison note in general terms that Gregory is influenced by Origen's principles of exegesis. See Gallay, "La Bible dans l'oeuvre de Grégoire de Nazianze le théologien," 325–26, and Harrison, *Festal Orations*, 175–176 n. 77. Bernardi makes no mention of Origen when discussing *Or*. 45. See Bernardi, *La Prédication des Pères Cappadociens*, 246–50.

[164] Origen, *Treatise on the Passover* 1.1–2.18. Edition of *Origène: Sur la Pâques*, eds. Octave Guérard and Pierre Nautin, Christianisme Antique 2 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1979). Cf. Origen, *Commentary on John* 10.67–118.

sense of *diabasis*, in the movement from Egypt to Canaan, and a spiritual sense of a journey from things below to things above and the land of promise. He omits Origen's lesson in the importance of knowing the Hebrew meaning when trying to interpret Hebrew.[165] For Gregory, just as some scriptural terms are changed to be clearer or more refined, so Phaska became Pascha as a more pious name for the Savior's passion.

Like Origen in his *Treatise on the Passover*, Gregory takes this opportunity to give a lesson on scriptural hermeneutics of the Old Testament, and on how the events recorded in Exodus pertain to him and his people in Christ. Citing Heb. 10: 1 and Exod. 25: 40, Gregory knows that the Law has nothing base in it, but, rather, is filled with spiritual meaning for those who are prepared to find it. Gregory must steer between an interpretation which is entirely coarse and low, which he unfortunately calls "Jewish," and that which is too contemplative and exalted, which he calls a "dream interpretation."[166] In explaining the Law, Gregory identifies himself with the people in the Old Testament by using the first person plural. Gregory uses the images of a crooked branch that can be put right, only by slow pressure, and an old fiery horse that can be tamed only by coaxing and encouragement. We needed gradual reshaping and training for the Law's goal: "drawing us into Christ."[167]

Gregory speaks with language reminiscent of the Incarnation concerning Christ's presence in the Law, making it not useless:

> Rather, the great and unsacrificed offering if I may speak thus, in regard to his first nature, has been intermingled with the sacrifices of the law and was a purification not for a small part of the inhabited earth or for a short time but for all the world and through the ages.[168]

Gregory thus indicates that the Law has not merely a temporary meaning, which may seem to be his understanding earlier, when he describes it as a middle wall between idols and God, allowing sacrifice only for a time. The Law—because it has Christ intermingled in it—has significance for all times, even if its practice was temporarily focused: wisely changing the piety of the people by removing them from sacrifices, and leading them to the Gospel in willing obedience.

In his interpretation of the Book of Exodus, Gregory focuses here on the legislation concerning the lamb consumed at Passover. For example, the details of the paschal lamb's perfection and maleness correspond to Christ himself.[169] Christ is perfect not only in his divinity, but also in his humanity,

[165] *Or*. 45.10. [166] *Or*. 45.12.

[167] *Or*. 45.13 (PG 36.640C); trans. Harrison, 172 (alt.).

[168] *Or*. 45.13 (PG 36.640C); trans. Harrison, 172 (alt.). The *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* text in this passage, reportedly from PG 36, is better than the printed text edition of PG 36, which I am using. The printed text clearly has *τῇ παώτῃ φύσει* for *τῇ πρώτῃ φύσει*.

[169] *Or*. 45.13; Exod. 12: 5.

which becomes one with God. Moreover, his maleness fulfills Isaiah's prophecy as he "cried out loudly from the virginal and maternal bonds with great power."[170] One application to Gregory's people is that when they hear of God's blood, passion, and death, they should lean on the staff, so that they will not waver. Without any shame or hesitation, in other words, they are to eat his body and drink his blood.[171] Concluding in this long Christological excursus the scriptural details of the Exodus, Gregory preaches:

> These things the law sketched beforehand; these things Christ fulfilled, the dissolver of the letter, the perfecter of the Spirit, who by his passion teaches suffering and by his glorification grants glorification with himself.[172]

Gregory then investigates the question: "To whom was the blood poured out for us, and why was it poured out, that great and renowned blood of God, who is both high priest and victim?"[173] We were held by the Evil One, says Gregory, because we received pleasure in exchange for evil, alluding to the Garden's forbidden fruit. Gregory then considers two possible answers to his question: to the devil and to God the Father, but he finds that neither one makes sense.

One possible authority for both positions is Origen. In commenting on Romans, Origen reads that 1 Pet. 1: 18–19 speaks of our being redeemed at a price, something confirmed by Paul (cf. 1 Cor. 7: 23). Origen writes:

> [U]ndoubtedly we were bought from someone whose slaves we were, who also demanded the price he wanted so that he might release from his authority those whom he was holding. Now it was the devil who was holding us, to whom we had been dragged off by our sins. Therefore he demanded the blood of Christ as the price for us.[174]

For his part, Gregory thinks that if Christ's blood is given as a ransom to the Evil One, then that is an outrage. The Evil One would then have a reward far surpassing that which he held for ransom. But if the blood was offered to the Father, that also does not seem right. We were not overcome by God when we

[170] *Or*. 45.13 (PG 36.641A); trans. Harrison, 172–73; cf. Isa. 7: 14, 8: 3. For a study of the quoted phrase, see Harrison, "The Logos Cries out from the Virgin's Womb: Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 45.13," *Studia Patristica* 47 (2010): 135–39.

[171] *Or*. 45.19; cf. *Ep*. 171. For an interpretation of Gregory's understanding of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, see Althaus, *Die Heilslehre des Heiligen Gregor von Nazianz*, 183–86.

[172] *Or*. 45.21 (PG 36.652D); trans. Harrison, 182.

[173] *Or*. 45.22 (PG 36.653A); trans. Harrison, 182. Again, the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* version of PG 36 is better than the printed text. The printed text begins with the error: *Τίνι γὰρ υὸ*.

[174] Origen, *In Rom*. 2.13.29; in *Origen: Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans Books 1–5*, trans. Thomas P. Scheck, The Fathers of the Church 103 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 161. Cf. Fernando Ocáriz, Lucas F. Mateo Seco, and Jose Antonio Riestra, *The Mystery of Jesus Christ*, corrected repr. (Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 2004), 261. For another reference, see Origen, *Hom. in Matt* 16.8. Cf. Egan, "The Deceit of the Devil According to Gregory Nazianzen," 8.

sinned. Moreover, how would Christ's blood please God, who would not accept Isaac's blood at the hand of Abraham, but replaced the reason-endowed victim with a ram? Origen, on the other hand, sees both Isaac and the ram offered in Isaac's place as types of Christ. Holding that Christ, as the "Word made flesh," is both priest and victim, Origen continues:

> For truly according to the spirit he offers the victim to the Father, but according to the flesh he himself is offered on the altar of the cross, because, as it is said of him 'Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sin of the world,' as it is said of him: 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech.'[175]

Turning back to Gregory, we see that he also considers Christ as priest and victim, but he insists that the Father neither asked for his Son's crucifixion, nor needed it.[176] Gregory gives his own reasons for the crucifixion:

> because of the divine plan, and because the human being must be sanctified by the humanity of God, that God might himself set us free and conquer the tyrant by force and lead us back to himself by the mediation of the Son, who also planned this to the honor of the Father, to whom it is manifest that he yields all things.[177]

After that, Gregory says that the greater part ought to be revered by silence.[178] Thinking it better to speak too little than too much, Gregory primarily corrects errors concerning theories that overstep bounds in postulating a ransom paid to the devil and a sacrifice owed to God the Father. But Gregory does insist that salvation occurs in the divine plan through the human reality of God incarnate. God sanctifies Gregory's life and the lives of others *precisely by living a fully human life*.[179] The Son as mediator, being both God

[175] Origen, *Hom. in Gen.* 8.9; in *Origen: Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, trans. Ronald E. Heine, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 71 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1981), 145.

[176] Gustaf Aulén, says that Gregory "prefers to use the idea of sacrifice." See Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, trans. A. G. Hebert (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 51. Winslow also says that the biblical image which Gregory most calls upon for Christ's death is sacrifice. See Winslow, *The Dynamics of Salvation*, 102–3.

[177] *Or.* 45.22 (PG 36.653B); trans. Harrison, 182.

[178] *Or.* 45.22. For revering or honoring by silence elsewhere, see Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 18.44 and Gregory's *Or.* 29.8. This call for respectful silence in theology may have influenced two of Gregory's most creative interpreters, Pseudo-Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor. Cf. Brian E. Daley, S.J. "Apokatastasis and 'Honorable Silence' in the Eschatology of Maximus the Confessor," in *Maximus Confessor*, eds. Felix Heinzer and Christoph Schönborn (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1982), 309–39, at p. 319 n. 45. For a broader discussion, see David Vincent Meconi, S.J. "Silence Proceeding," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 5 (2002): 59–75.

[179] Cf. Brian E. Daley, S.J., "'He Himself is Our Peace' (Eph 2: 14): Early Christian Views of Redemption in Christ," in *The Redemption: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on Christ as Redeemer*, eds. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, S.J., and Gerald O'Collins, S.J. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 149–76, at p. 173.

and human, can overthrow the devil and lead us back to the Father by completing that life in a death on a cross. Moreover, while Augustine would later insist that Christ wins his victory over the devil by justice, rather than by power (which is the devil's way), Gregory has no difficulty in seeing salvation achieved by force.[180]

Gregory then lays out a double typology, first in reference to an Old Testament image whose meaning Gregory inverts from what may be expected. Concerning the bronze serpent on the pole, Origen had declared, with John's Gospel, that it is a *typos* of Christ's passion.[181] Gregory, however, considers the image of the bronze serpent, not as a representation (*typos*) of the one who suffered for us, but as a contrary symbol (*antitypos*) to him.[182] For Gregory, the bronze serpent symbolizes death itself, which has been overthrown through the cross of Christ. People are then healed by looking upon the bronze serpent, because their death has been overcome by the victory of Christ, who is himself the giver of life.

The Christian celebration of Pascha also lies within Gregory's typological hermeneutics.[183] The liturgy, although clearer than the Old Testament type, is still a *typos*. This also seems to be indebted to Origen, whose *Treatise on the Passover* says that just as the mysteries of the Passover have been replaced by the truth of the new covenant (*noui testamenti ueritate sublata sunt*), so too will the mysteries of the new covenant not be necessary in the resurrection.[184] Gregory emphasizes eschatological participation with the Word, who will teach in a way exceeding the limitations we now experience, when he drinks with us in his Father's kingdom.[185]

From this emphasis on Christ's teaching, Gregory continues his own teaching with details from the Law in exhorting his people to celebrate the Pascha worthily. Gregory urges his audience to pass through the first veil, and approach the second in order to peep into the Holy of Holies. But as if that were still not enough, Gregory declares that he will say something even greater, and proceeds to give a meditation on being personally united to Christ's sacrifice:

> Let us sacrifice ourselves to God, or rather offer sacrifice every day and in every moment. Let us accept all things for the Word. By sufferings let us imitate his

[180] Cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate* 13.

[181] *Or*. 45.22. Cf. Origen, *Treatise on the Passover* 14.22–15.11, and John 3: 14.

[182] Gregory uses the word *antitypos* in several ways in his writings, but here it is clearly meant to be in opposition to *typos*. Cf. Lampe's Lexicon, s.v. *antitypos*, which cites *Or*. 45.22 as the example of this definition.

[183] *Or*. 45.23.

[184] Origen, *Treatise on the Passover*, 32.20–28 (preserved in a Latin translation attributed to Victor of Capua). Note the Latin verb *sublata sunt*, whose more literal translation may have connotations of Hegel's "Aufhebung" or Lonergan's "sublation."

[185] Cf. Matt. 26: 29. Gregory's stress on the Word's eschatological teaching is also reminiscent of Origen.

> suffering, by blood let us exalt his blood, let us willingly climb up on the cross. Sweet are the nails, even if very painful. For to suffer with Christ and for Christ is preferable to feasting with others.[186]

This exhortation to mimesis makes Christ's Pascha not merely an annual celebration, but a mystery present at every moment of every day. Gregory and his audience are to offer themselves in suffering with Christ and for Christ. These persuasive words show that being with Christ in his suffering, even in exceeding pain, is a continual Christian feast, far surpassing what the world considers to be pleasures.

The oration's next chapter gives a series of mystical identifications related to Christ's Pascha. In this series, Gregory details a list of parts to play: Simon of Cyrene; the good thief; Joseph of Arimethea; Nicodemus; the attendant women—a certain Mary or another Mary, Salome, and Joanna; Peter, John, and Thomas. Gregory tells his listener to go down to hades and know the mysteries of Christ even there—leaving the question open of whether Christ saves everyone absolutely, or only those who believe.[187] Gregory also bids others to ascend with Christ into heaven and to give the Psalm 24 response to the question, "Who is this King of Glory?" The marks of Christ's passion mark his body, made radiant by his divinity. Gregory says that nothing is more beloved (*erasimiōteron*) or more beautiful (*hōraioteron*) than this.[188]

After the repetition of material from *Or*. 38.14–15 in *Or*. 45.26–27, Gregory sums up the discourse from the perspective of creation, the commandment in the Garden of Eden, the devil's envy and human transgression, and the consequences of that sin. He speaks of the remedy needed: "We needed a God made flesh and made dead, that we might live. We were made dead with him that we might be purified. We have risen with him since we were made dead with him. We were glorified with him since we rose with him."[189] Gregory sings the praises of the wonders attesting God crucified (*theos stauroumenos*): the sun darkened and rekindled; the veil split; blood and water pouring from Christ's side; the earth shaken; rocks broken up for the sake of the Rock; the dead raised, so as to bring faith to the general

[186] *Or*. 45.23 (PG 36.656B); trans. Harrison, 183–84.

[187] Cf. Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, 83–85.

[188] *Or*. 45.25 (PG 36.657C). Again the printed PG text has a corruption corrected in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* version of the same text.

[189] *Or*. 45.28 (PG 36.661C); trans. Harrison, 189. This passage should be better known. Timothy Aelurus, Patriarch of Alexandria (457–77), cited a portion of this passage as a witness for his anti-Chalcedonian position. R. Y. Ebied and L. R. Wickham have a translation from the Syrac text: "We needed a God who becomes incarnate and dies" (Ms. B.L. Add. 12,156, fol. 49^{r}). They note, "Not elsewhere apparently attested." See Rifaat Y. Ebied and Lionel R. Wickham, "Timothy Aelurus: Against the Definition of the Council of Chalcedon," in *After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church History*, eds. C. Laga, J. A. Munitiz, and L. van Rompay, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 18 (Leuven: Departement Oriëntalistiek, 1985), 115–66, at p. 158 n. 87.

resurrection; the signs related to the tomb. But none can compare to what Gregory calls *the wonder of my salvation*: "a few drops of blood recreated the whole world and become for all human beings like a curdling agent for milk, binding and drawing us together into one."[190] The image of all coming together like one block of cheese is admittedly unusual, but the idea behind it is quite common to Gregory's writings. Jesus saves by gathering all into unity with him—a theme broached by Gregory in his first oration on Pascha.[191]

In a rhetorical twist, Gregory concludes his oration by speaking to Pascha directly as to a person, i.e., Christ himself.[192] He calls Pascha standard Christological titles: the Word of God, Light, Life, Wisdom, and Power. Gregory prays that this oration (numbered the last in his collection) will be accepted, not as first-fruits, but as a completion of the fruit he offers. He ends with a doxology of looking forward to heaven, where he hopes to make an acceptable offering on that holy altar to the praise of the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit forever.

Or. 44, On New Sunday

Before concluding this chapter, it should be recalled that Gregory knows that the mysteries of the resurrection cannot be contained by a single celebration. By his time in the fourth century, special attention was given to Easter's Octave Day, called "New Sunday." We glance at his oration, which also celebrates the martyr Mamas.[193] Gregory preaches how Christ's resurrection is now applied to make all things new. He expresses in lavish detail the spring's awakening to new life, but the focus is something other than the earth. Gregory says: "But since, by the envy of the Evil One, death came into the world and took man captive by deceit, God has come to suffer in the way we suffer, becoming human, and has endured the poverty of being constituted as flesh, 'so that we might become rich by his poverty.'" Gregory loves to emphasize how God in the Incarnation comes to identify himself with our lives, even our sufferings. Gregory continues, "From this came death, burial and resurrection; and from them, new creation, and festival after festival." Gregory then gives the wondrous meaning of his autobiographical Christology, "So here I am feasting

[190] *Or.* 45.29 (PG 36.664A); trans. Harrison, 189.

[191] *Or.* 1.1.

[192] *Or.* 45.30. Cf. Cantalamessa's use of this to end his introduction in Raniero Cantalamessa, O.F.M. Cap., *Easter: Meditations on the Resurrection*, trans. Demetrio S. Yocum (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006), vii–viii.

[193] Daley does not agree with Tillemont's suggestion of a dating after Gregory's time in Constantinople. Tillemont's influence is seen in Bernardi, *La Prédication des Pères Cappadociens*, 251–253. Daley accepts the comment of Archbishop Nicetas of Heraclea (*c.*1100), who places it in Cappadocia during Basil's lifetime. See Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 154–55.

again, celebrating the renewal of my own salvation."[194] For Gregory, Christ's Paschal mysteries must be placed within the cosmic story of creation's redemption after sin, and have their meaning, ultimately, in the effect for Gregory himself: "my own salvation."

CONCLUSION

"How many festivals there are, it seems to me, for each of the mysteries of Christ!" exclaims Gregory. "Yet there is one main point for all of them: my perfection, my re-shaping, my return to the first Adam."[195] Gregory intends his words from *On the Theophany* to apply to all of Christ's mysteries. In this autobiographical perspective, we see how Gregory shapes his rhetoric to evoke his personal union with the fullness of Christ's life, for Christ came to experience all that we suffer. What began at the Incarnation in God's mixture with humanity, continues in the blending of events in the lives of Christ and Gregory. As a pastor, Gregory identifies what he experiences with the lives of his people. We have seen evidence of this in the Epiphany orations, in the many references to the stonings of Christ and Gregory, and in the Paschal orations. Ultimately, the mysteries of Christ's life yield to other mysteries affecting Gregory: those of the Holy Spirit.

This chapter on Christ's mysteries concludes with a look at the *Festal Oration* that ends the season of celebrating the Paschal mysteries. *Or*. 41, *On Pentecost*, provides another fascinating insight into Gregory's autobiographical Christology, particularly in its limitation. His Christology gives way to his Pneumatology, for it is the Spirit of Christ that makes Christ present to Gregory and to all the Church.[196] Gregory's strong campaign to call the Holy Spirit "God" in a full Trinitarian theology, thus recognizing the equality

[194] *Or*. 44.4 (PG 36.612B); trans. Daley, 157.

[195] *Or*. 38.16, analyzed earlier in this chapter.

[196] Gregory's Pneumatology has been underappreciated, a fact Christopher Beeley brings out well and partly rectifies in his important studies: "The Holy Spirit in the Cappadocians: Past and Present," *Modern Theology* 26 (2010): 90–119; "The Holy Spirit in Gregory Nazianzen;" and chap. 3 of *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*. In his book, Beeley suggests that one subjectively experiences the Holy Spirit, who enables confession of Christ, who in turn gives access to the Father (cf. pp. 179–80). Yet, it seems confusing to say that "the doctrine of the Spirit gives rise to the doctrine of the Son" (p. 179). That statement seems counterfactual to Gregory's order of theology in the gradual revelation of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as well as the experience of articulating the doctrines of the Son and the Holy Spirit in the fourth-century controversies. For the first full-length study of Gregory's Pneumatology, see now Daniel G. Opperwall, "The Holy Spirit in the Life and Writings of Gregory of Nazianzus," Ph.D. diss., McMaster University, 2012. Opperwall shows that Gregory's Pneumatology is chiefly centered on how the Spirit relates to the Church. Opperwall writes, "Gregory does not generally discuss the Spirit's relationship to the Church theoretically. Instead, he

of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, led him to emphasize the Holy Spirit in Pentecost's celebration.

In treating Pentecost, Gregory draws connections between the Word and the Holy Spirit, something he had done in another way in *Or*. 31.[197] In *Or*. 41, he summarizes his understanding of Christ's bodily dwelling among us, which includes the virginal birth and many subsequent mysteries (such as Christ's circumcision and his stoning) up to his death, resurrection, ascension, and the continual mysteries of Christ's patience toward those who make him suffer even now. Gregory then proclaims, "Such indeed are the things concerning Christ; and what follows we will see to be more glorious, and may we too be seen."[198] What follows is, in fact, Gregory's preaching on the Holy Spirit, with the Spirit's guidance, to show that the Holy Spirit is truly God, not a creature, and so to affirm that the Trinity is one divinity.[199] Gregory shows that the Holy Spirit is always ranked with the Father and the Son, and is always active in the world. In Christ's life on earth, the Spirit was present not by independent action, but by accompanying Jesus as his equal in honor.[200] This is made manifest in three ways: before Christ was glorified in the passion, as when those sick and with evil spirits were purified by the Holy Spirit; after the glorification of the resurrection, in the inbreathing of the Holy Spirit by the risen Christ; and after the ascension, in the distribution of fiery tongues (a symbol of the Holy Spirit's relationship to the Word).[201] In this final manifestation, the Spirit is present, not only by his activity (*energeiai*), but also in essence (*ousiōdōs*).[202]

Gregory finds that when Christ calls the Holy Spirit "another Advocate," he indicates that the Spirit is equal to Christ.[203] The Holy Spirit's equality has tremendous importance for Gregory's Trinitarian theology, and it also helps us to understand his interpretation of scriptural details that might otherwise be overlooked. In paralleling the Son and the Spirit, Gregory observes that both the institution of the Eucharist and the descent of the Holy Spirit were

emphasizes his own personal place within this relationship" (p. 4). For Opperwall on *Or*. 41, see pp. 200–13.

[197] See esp. *Or*. 31.29.

[198] *Or*. 41.5 (SC 358.326); trans. Harrison, 148.

[199] Cf. *Or*. 31.26–27 on the revelation of the Holy Spirit as God after the Son was manifested as God.

[200] *Or*. 41.11; cf. Boris Bobrinskoy, "The Indwelling of the Spirit in Christ: 'Pneumatic Christology' in the Cappadocian Fathers," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 28 (1984): 49–65, esp. pp. 60–61.

[201] Gregory mentions the connection between the tongues and the Word a few lines later in *Or*. 41.12.

[202] *Or*. 41.11; cf. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 172–73.

[203] *Or*. 41.12; cf. John 14: 16.

mysteries in an upper room. Gregory preaches on the former using mixture imagery:

> And Jesus himself in an upper chamber gave communion in the Mystery to those being initiated into the higher realities, to show by this on the one hand that God must descend to us, as I know happened formerly to Moses, and on the other hand that we must ascend, and thus there will be a communion of God with human beings by a coalescing of dignity. As long as each remains at his own level, the one at the top, the other in lowliness, the goodness is not mingled and the love for humankind is not shared, and a great chasm that cannot be crossed is in the middle, not only separating the rich man from Lazarus and the longed-for bosom of Abraham, but also the created and changing nature from that which is uncreated and stable.[204]

The passage is a rich, and typically Gregorian, exposition of mixture language in Christology, sparked by attention to the biblical detail that both the Son and the Holy Spirit work in an "upper room," to elevate humanity.

Putting the Spirit's activities in perspective, Gregory shows how the Spirit fashions with the Son both the original creation and the new creation of the resurrection.[205] For example, Gregory delights in the balance of Psalm 33: 6: "By the Word of the Lord the heavens were established, and by the Spirit of his mouth all their power." Gregory shows the Holy Spirit's activities in calling the prophets and the apostles to be heralds of Christ. He says, "If he [the Spirit] finds fishermen, he catches them in a net for Christ, they who catch the whole world with the line of the Word."[206] Where does this narration of the Spirit's guidance of biblical figures in Christological conformity lead? Once again, to Gregory himself. He says:

> He also has made me today a bold herald to you. If I do not suffer anything, thanks be to God; but if I do suffer, thanks even so; in the one case that he may spare those who hate us; and in the other that he may sanctify us by granting us to receive this reward for the ministry of the gospel, to be made perfect through blood.[207]

It is the Spirit who makes Gregory the Word's bold herald, a model for the Church's Christomorphic ministry.

[204] *Or.* 41.12 (SC 358.342); trans. Harrison, 154–55.
[205] *Or.* 41.14.
[206] *Or.* 41.14 (SC 358.346); trans. Harrison, 156.
[207] *Or.* 41.14 (SC 358.346–48); trans. Harrison, 157.

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6

Gregory's Christomorphic Ministry

Modern scholarship tried to fit Gregory into the confines of *dogmengeschichtliche* Christology, and Gregory was found wanting. As we have seen in his Christomorphic autobiography and autobiographical Christology, Gregory's doctrinal formulations are embedded in a pervasive blending of Christ with his own life. To abstract Gregory's Christology, and leave behind his rhetorical aims, risks distorting his authentic teaching. Thus, *pace* those who consider Gregory to be a popularizer of a theological or Christological system previously worked out, his writings exude a highly sophisticated and profoundly personal insight into the mystery of Christ.[1] He crafts his presentation to persuade others to be purified and, with Gregory himself as their model, to become like Christ in deification.[2] In this way, Gregory articulates his relationship with Christ for a pastoral purpose. Indeed, this exemplifies how all of Gregory's writing, which so frequently appears self-referential, could be read as expressing Gregory's ministry to others.

What are we to make of Gregory's profuse writings concerning his reluctance for ordained ministry, his withdrawals from active ministry, and his recurrent tone of being a victim?[3] The suggestion that Gregory was unsuitable

[1] For example, Prestige writes, "The Cappadocian Settlement finally fixed the statement of Trinitarian orthodoxy in the formula of one ousia and three hypostaseis. It was worked out largely by Basil, supported by the strenuous efforts of the uncompromising Epiphanius, preached by the inspired populariser, Gregory of Nazianzus, and elaborated by the acute and speculative mind of Gregory of Nyssa." See George Leonard Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, 2d edn. (London: S.P.C.K., 1952), 233–34. For the variety of Gregory's writing on "innovation," which includes bold assertions of innovations, see Gautier, "Grégoire l'innovateur? Tradition et innovation théologiques chez Grégoire de Nazianze."

[2] For influential surveys that consider Gregory to be exceedingly individualistic, see Bouyer, *The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers*, 341, and Hans von Campenhausen, *The Fathers of the Greek Church*, trans. Stanley Godman (New York: Pantheon, 1959), 106.

[3] Philip Rousseau suggests the dramatic swing in scholarship away from viewing Gregory's work as unsuccessful when reviewing a recent collection of essays on Gregory: "much else in the book is dedicated to the commendable thesis that Gregory was *not* a morbid failure" [original emphasis]. See Philip Rousseau, "Retrospect: Images, Reflections and the 'Essential' Gregory," in *Gregory of Nazianzus: Images and Reflections*, eds. Jostein Børtnes and Tomas Hägg, 283–95, at p. 283.

for pastoral work does not do justice to fourth-century texts and contexts. For example, it ignores Gregory's sophistication in exploiting the *topos* of the reluctant ruler.[4] According to this understanding, everyone who comes into high office must do so only because of society's urgent demand. Plato explains in his *Republic*:

> The ruler who is good for anything ought not to beg his subjects to be ruled by him, although the present governors of humanity are of a different stamp; they may be justly compared to the mutinous sailors, and the true helmsmen to those who are called by them good-for-nothings and star-gazers.[5]

Similarly, Gregory's own teacher of rhetoric in Athens, Himerios, both refused to speak to his disciples gathered in the hall to hear him and feigned abandonment of his place as rhetor—so as to be begged to fulfill his office of speaking.[6] At times, the refusal of office, political or ecclesiastical, could be a sign of the candidate's humility—and thus worthiness—to assume office.[7] One should also not forget the various biblical figures relevant to Gregory's attitude toward ministry, such as those who give evidence of avoiding their call and of acquiescing for the sake of God's plan for the people.[8] Most especially, the common Christian interpretation of Jesus Christ as both

[4] Susanna Elm, "The Diagnostic Gaze: Gregory of Nazianzus' Theory of Orthodox Priesthood in his Orations 6 *De pace* and 2 *Apologia de fuga sua*," in *Orthodoxie, Christianisme, histoire*, eds. Susanna Elm, Éric Rebillard, and Antonella Romano (Rome: École française de Rome, 2000), 83–100, at pp. 92–93. Elm cites the texts of Plato *Rep*. 6.489c; Dio Cass. 36.24.5–6; 36.27.2; and Plin. *Pan*. 5.5. She credits the work of Jean Béranger, *Principatus: Études de notions et d'histoire politiques dans l'antiquité gréco-romaine*, eds. Jean Béranger et al., Université de Lausanne Publications de la Faculté des Lettres, 20 (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1975), 165–90, and Rita Lizzi, *Il potere episcopale nell'Oriente romano: rappresentazione ideologica e realtà politica (IV–V sec. d.C.)* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1987), 23. Cf. Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 158–63 and 188.

[5] Plato, *Republic* 6.489 (trans. Jowett 1.750 [alt.]).

[6] McGuckin discusses *Eclogues* 20 and 21 of Himerios in McGuckin, "Autobiography as Apologia in St. Gregory of Nazianzus," 165. McGuckin also notes that Gregory addresses his *Ep*. 189–90 to Himerios.

[7] Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 142–47. In her study that has many merits, Rapp does not give sustained attention to Gregory of Nazianzus. She writes of Gregory: "He was eventually entrusted with the sees of the rural backwater of Sasima and later of the imperial capital of Constantinople, neither of which he held with much success" (196). That is an odd comment. There is no proof that Gregory ever visited Sasima after episcopal ordination, and Gregory's episcopal ministry achieved an extraordinary theological success beyond the conventions of his time (and of modern scholarship still trying to make sense of Gregory's career).

[8] See the suggestive remarks on scriptural precedents made in Andrea Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church: The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 3–4 and 124–25. As we will see, Gregory displays a fascination with the prophet Jonah, whose flight, self-sacrifice, prayer, rescue (like Christ's from the belly of the earth), and preaching serve as an oft-cited point of comparison for Gregory's ministry.

priest and victim gives abundant support for Christian ministers to offer their lives in self-sacrifice.

In the cases of his presbyteral and episcopal ordinations, Gregory protests after being ordained, but comes to accept office in the forms of retreat/return and writing. He returns to assume office and preach for the Lord's plan of the good of souls. From this stance of ministry as a response to God's call for the sake of the Church, Gregory frequently scorns the ill-prepared, such as the immature and those who have not yet been purified by an ascetic study of the Word. Unworthy for ministry, they greedily fight for the highest ecclesiastical office. As for his frequent withdrawal during pastoral leadership, Gregory seems to view these retreats as a kind of exile due to various internal and external sufferings. Gregory's "failures" in ministry thus expose how those around him fail to live as Christ commanded.

Various recent studies have considered Gregory's pastoral ministry, particularly in its setting of the fourth-century cultural elite and the relationship between contemplation and action.[9] While those perspectives have been quite helpful in understanding Gregory's ministry, his Christological accent in priestly service also deserves a closer hearing.[10] Sharing in Christ's own identity as a priest, Gregory sets out to shape a ministry faithful to Christ's mission. Moreover, he does this in ways that, although perhaps not fitting modern ideals of leadership, hold an intelligibility, and even an extraordinary power, when we consider Gregory's own context.

To take up just one example immediately: Gregory, like Himerios, at times, refuses to speak. More than a rhetorical stunt, Gregory's self-imposed silence during Lent 382 (less than a year after his retirement from the see of Constantinople) was a sacrificial silence of a priest—broadcasted for others to hear. He writes about this silence in *Ep.* 107–14, 116–19 and in *Carm.* 2.1.34–2.1.38.[11]

[9] See Beeley, McGuckin, Sterk, Daley, Elm, McLynn, Louth, and Abrams Rebillard, who, in varying ways, show how Gregory uses what may be thought to be ministerial failure to his pastoral advantage.

[10] Limberis perceptively writes that scholars interested in theology have generally overlooked the interpersonal exchanges in the lives of Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa, which would be of interest for biographical information and the social history of late fourth-century bishops. See Vasiliki Limberis, "Bishops Behaving Badly: Helladius Challenges Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa," in *Re-reading Gregory of Nazianzus*, ed. Christopher A. Beeley, 159–77, at p. 159. A more comprehensive theological approach can help us attain a better picture.

[11] For analyses of Gregory's silence, see esp. Bradley K. Storin, "In a Silent Way: Asceticism and Literature in the Rehabilitation of Gregory of Nazianzus," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 19 (2011): 225–57; Gautier, *La Retraite et le sacerdoce chez Grégoire de Nazianze*, 195–213; and (particularly for a detailed commentary on *Carm.* 2.1.34) Abrams Rebillard, chap. 3 "Gregory's Speaking Memorial of His Silence," in "Speaking for Salvation," 130–228, and Abrams Rebillard, "Historiography as Devotion: *Poemata de seipso*," in *Re-reading Gregory of Nazianzus*, ed. Christopher A. Beeley, 125–42, esp. pp. 133–41. Storin writes that Gregory "transformed himself into the Christ-like protagonist who prevailed over his demonic adversaries both in spite of and because of his weakness, silence, and patience" (p. 226).

The first poem, 210 verses of elegiacs, speaks of how he performed a sacrificial mystery with the mortal sufferings of God, according to the laws of Christ the King. By shutting the door of his lips, he learned to measure his words and be an instrument of God, celebrating, not Troy in song, but the Trinity and the sufferings of Christ, which deify him. The poem concludes with Gregory's appeal to Christ, the remedy for mortals, to restrain envy and snatch Gregory from sharp tongues. In the final line, Gregory offers to Christ this poem as "a speaking memorial of my silence."[12] After three brief poems in iambic trimeter, Gregory addresses the collection's last poem, fifty-three verses of elegiacs, directly to Christ the King after the silence, at Pascha. Gregory offers the first sound from his mouth as a "pure sacrifice of the purest priest."[13] Gregory prays:

> Immortal and reborn as mortal for me, Fleshless Height,
> Finally bearing flesh with the pains of mortals,
> Through you I live, through you I speak, and through you I am a breathing burnt-offering,
> Which alone remains of all that I had.[14]

Just as in Christ, so also in Gregory is priesthood inseparable from self-sacrifice.

In this poem, Christ's resurrection prompts Gregory to call out the liturgical cry of "Today" no less than four times. The first two speak directly of Christ's resurrection from the dead and appearance to mortals; the third extols how the angelic chorus praises Christ in a coronation hymn, while the fourth refers to Gregory himself, having loosed his muted lips, as Christ's hymn-servant.[15] Gregory, the priest preeminently devoted to the *logos*, thus becomes a model for others in purification and sacrificial service.[16]

This example from the poetry on his silence demonstrates Gregory's priestly art in writing, for his own salvation and that of others.[17] In *On Himself and the Bishops*, he writes:

[12] *Carm*. 2.1.34.210 (PG 37.1322); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 338.

[13] *Carm*. 2.1.38.3 (PG 37.1325); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 342.

[14] *Carm*. 2.1.38.27–30 (PG 37.1327); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 343–44.

[15] Cf. *Ep*. 119 on Gregory putting his tongue to death with Christ and raising it up with Christ's resurrection.

[16] Storin writes, "In addition to priestly purity, Lenten silence offers Gregory the opportunity to 'Christ-ify' himself: as Christ put his body to death during Lent, so too would Gregory put his tongue to death, and as God's Word was raised from the dead, so too would Gregory's words." See Storin, "In a Silent Way," 246, cf. pp. 251, 253, and 256.

[17] Cf. Winslow, *The Dynamics of Salvation*, 20–21 n. 3. Gregory himself would be a candidate for Karl Rahner's ideal of one person being both priest and poet. See Karl Rahner, S.J., "Priest and Poet," *Theological Investigations*, vol. 3, trans. Karl-H. and Boniface Kruger (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1967), 294–317.

> Let there be one duty for this priest, and only one:
> To purify souls both in earthly life and in word (ἐν βίῳ τε καὶ λόγῳ),
> Raising them up in divinely-inspired motions,
> Calm and high-minded, giving shape only to
> Divine and unsullied examples,
> As a mirror, formed within him,
> And to make pure offerings on behalf of his children
> Until he might make an offering of them.[18]

The one priestly work thus has a twofold expression: a purification of souls through the priest's *bios* and *logos*. By translating his life into teaching, Gregory exposes his mind for the purification of his readers.

Taking this pastoral perspective on Gregory's literary ministry, the chapter will have three considerations. First, it examines how Gregory writes of Christ within *Or*. 2's treatment of the priesthood. It then considers other select works on ministry pertaining to examples of ministerial uses and abuses of Christ. The chapter then shifts to select themes that Gregory addresses, through Christocentric rhetoric, which directly concern the lives of his people.

CHRIST IN THE ORDAINED MINISTRY OF *OR*. 2

Or. 2, *On his flight*, exemplifies Gregory's remarkable blend of autobiography and Christology for the proper philosophical life and ordained ministry.[19] Ostensibly an apologia for fleeing Nazianzus following his presbyteral ordination in late 361, *On his flight* has influenced the Christian understanding of the priestly ministry arguably more than any other writing after the New Testament.[20] Susanna Elm notes how Gregory develops a new understanding of the orthodox priesthood, one that demands ascetic contemplation of the Scriptures for the right faith. Gregory's experience of his own father, an

[18] *Carm*. 2.1.12.751–58 (PG 37.1221); trans. Abrams Rebillard, 35 (alt.).

[19] *De fuga*, or *On his flight*, is a considerable abbreviation of *Or*. 2's traditional title. See SC 247.84, which gives another abbreviation, *Apologētikos*, but the full customary title in Byzantine manuscripts is basically: *An apologetic discourse of St. Gregory the Theologian, on account of his flight to Pontus and his return from there, because of his ordination as presbyter; in the which the subject is: what the nature of priesthood is, and what kind of person a bishop should be*. Daley alerts the reader to this and translates the title in "Saint Gregory of Nazianzus as Pastor and Theologian," 112 n. 11; cf. the titulus on SC 247.84. See Susanna Elm's lengthy study of this oration in her *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, esp. pp. 147–265. For her description of the *logos apologētikos*, in considering Julian's *Epistle to the Athenians*, see pp. 75–76.

[20] The influence of Gregory's oration can be detected in John Chrysostom's *On the Priesthood*, and Gregory of Nazianzus is explicitly cited in Pope Gregory I's *Book of Pastoral Rule*, both extremely important for the development of the theology of the priesthood. For Chrysostom's revision of Gregory's understanding of the priesthood, see Andrew Hofer, O.P., "The Reordering of Relationships in John Chrysostom's 'De sacerdotio,'" *Augustinianum* 51 (2011): 451–71.

aristocratic convert to the faith, who had apparently signed an unorthodox creed out of ignorant simplicity, may have very well been a prime motivation in Gregory's call for a new kind of pastoral leadership. Elm writes that Gregory conceived these innovations "as perfection intended to move 'backward', that is closer to the ideal Christian leader Paul, and through him, Christ, in steadily improving *mimesis*."[21] As we will now see, Gregory identifies the reason for his priestly ministry to be the same as Christ's ministry.

In a passage of central importance, Gregory defines the priesthood in a way that alludes to Platonic and to Pauline texts, and has Christ in the very hearts of those made divine through the priesthood's service:

> But our subject is to provide the soul with wings (cf. *Phaedrus* 246), to snatch it from the world and give it to God. If it abides, to keep it as the image; if it is in danger, to lead it by the hand; if ruined, to restore it—and to make Christ dwell in hearts by the Spirit (cf. Eph 3: 17). In summary, our subject is to make it a god, with the blessedness above and one of the host above.[22]

As we continually see in Gregory's Christology, Christ is not merely external. He is portrayed as alive by the Holy Spirit in Gregory's heart. Gregory dedicates his Christomorphic self-reflection to do this mission for others—which he goes on to argue was Christ's own.

After this description of the priesthood, Gregory touches upon this ministerial purpose as the reason for the Law and the prophets, to both of which he gives an explicitly Christological reference, and then he turns to the mission of Christ himself at considerable length.[23] This same purpose is the reason for the Incarnation, which he describes in mixture language. After doing so, he relates a principle, "everything of the one above us was exchanged for everything of ours," more famously expressed in a negative soteriological formula elsewhere.[24] Christ himself is the new mystery in God's plan of *philanthrōpia* to remedy Adam's fall. Gregory provides a list of how the new mystery appears through the mysteries of Christ's life. He attends to details of Christ's birth, such as Mary's virginity, the manger, and the star that guided the magi. He moves to Christ's baptism, the Father's testimony at that time, as well as the Son's subsequent fasting and conquering of the one who had overcome Adam. From the public ministry between the desert of temptation and the cross, Gregory mentions the casting out of devils, the healing of diseases, and the

[21] Elm, "The Diagnostic Gaze: Gregory of Nazianzus' Theory of Orthodox Priesthood in his Orations 6 *De pace* and 2 *Apologia de fuga sua*," 86–87.

[22] *Or.* 2.22 (SC 247.118–20). Bernardi notes the allusion to the baptismal formula of renouncing Satan and adhering to Christ; see SC 247.120 n. 1. Elm comments, "To bring Christ home into the human heart, to affiliate man with God—that is the *telos* of Gregory's divine mandate as philosopher and physician of the soul." See Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 176.

[23] *Or.* 2.23–25.

[24] *Or.* 2.24 (SC 247.120); cf. *Ep.* 101.5[32].

great *kērygma* to those who are little. Similar to his eye for detail in Christ's infancy, Gregory expounds upon Christ's cross as perfectly suited to combat Adam's sin: the tree, versus a tree; hands of generosity nailed, versus a hand stretched out in unrestrained indulgence; the reconciliation of earth's ends, versus Adam's expulsion; the gall, versus the tasting of the fruit; the thorny crown, versus evil's dominion; death ,versus death, etc. Gregory concludes in the resurrection, affirming that all these things lead us in an education (*paidagōgia*).[25]

Indeed, *everything* in Christ's life was to achieve the same purpose Gregory articulates for the priesthood. Gregory expresses this mission of Christ and the priest in medicinal terms, as healing for our weakness and preparing our return to paradise. More exactly, Gregory affirms his new priestly identity as a minister and coworker in Christ's own service to heal the passions of people's souls.[26] Later in the oration, he speaks again of sharing Christ's priesthood and thus being made like him: God who makes others gods.[27] As Christopher Beeley rightly emphasizes, Gregory views pastoral ministry as the consequence and goal of God's saving work in history.[28] Far from shirking the responsibility to care for the needs of others, Gregory blends Christ with himself as a priestly exemplar for healing souls. Not insignificantly, Gregory highlights his own weakness in this apologia, while propounding the priest's mission to distribute the *logos* of Scripture according to the quite varying needs of souls.[29]

This teaching of the *logos* includes the mysteries of Christ's life and, ultimately, the sovereign and blessed Trinity, which must be proclaimed for the illumination of others without collapsing the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit into one, for fear of polytheism, or severing them into opposing divinities. For example, people must not be so devoted to Christ as to neglect his sonship, or the Father as origin.[30] In following Gregory's careful articulation, both the oneness and the threeness of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are held in

[25] *Or*. 2.25. Bouteneff comments on this passage to say that Gregory's account of Paradise is about Christ and us. See Peter Bouteneff, "Whatever That Was!: Paradise According to Gregory of Nazianzus," 145.

[26] *Or*. 2.26.

[27] *Or*. 2.73. Cf. the mediatorial role of the priest in *Or*. 2.91.

[28] Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 239.

[29] This begins with *Or*. 2.35. Ministering the *logos* as the priority of the priesthood from this oration stems from Origen; cf. Andrew Hofer, O.P., "Origen on the Ministry of God's Word in the *Homilies on Leviticus*," *Nova et Vetera* (Eng.) 7 (2009): 153–74. Cf. Vatican II, *Presbyterorum Ordinis* 4. Brian Daley comments on Gregory's understanding of the priesthood: "The portrait of ministry that emerges is clearly a prophetic, rather than a predominately institutional or clerical one. Identifying his own concerns with those of the prophets and Paul, Gregory suggests that the minister must be consumed by the word he proclaims, become personally an embodiment of his own message, if his work of mediation is to be fully authentic." See Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 56.

[30] *Or*. 2.38.

balance.[31] Gregory's priestly ministry, indeed, has an unabashedly doctrinal focus, one that is precisely formulated to draw people into the mysteries of God through Christ's life, death, and resurrection in the Holy Spirit.

In extolling various scriptural models of the priesthood, Gregory offers an extended look at the Apostle Paul's ministry, which was so perfectly conformed to that of Christ. Gregory says of Paul that he "imitates Christ, who became a curse for us, who took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses; or, to use more measured terms, he is ready, next to Christ, to suffer anything, even as one of the ungodly, if only they be saved."[32] For Gregory, Paul lived not to himself, but to Christ and his preaching.[33] Paul, as the model priest, communicates the life and teaching of Christ himself.

Nearing the end of his discourse, Gregory recounts at length, with abundant scriptural allusion, what would disqualify a man from being a priest.[34] At different points in this oration, Gregory is keen to expose publicly, to a degree greater than any previous fourth-century writer, how the unworthy have infiltrated the ranks of the clergy.[35] No one is worthy of the great God and of the sacrifice and of the high priest, says our Gregory, unless he has first given himself completely to God as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, in worship conformed to the *logos* (*logikēn latreian*).[36] Gregory recounts how that man personally must have all of his members purified by an internal sacrifice so as to offer up the external sacrifice: hands consecrated by holy works; eyes trained to admire the Creator in the midst of creation; ears open to hear the instructions of the Lord, etc. He then asks a series of questions about who would dare take up the priesthood without the proper qualification. Gregory demands that the man have a heart burning for the Scripture and have the mind of Christ. The candidate for orders must be God's temple, the

[31] On the teaching proclaimed in Gregory's ministry, Brian Daley comments: "The proclamation and interpretation of the word of the Gospel, in fact, which forms the center of Gregory's view of ministry, seems to be nothing more or less than the continuing attempt to articulate the inseparable, single Mystery of God's involvement in time, and of God's involvement of the creature of time in his own eternal life: the Mystery of God's life-giving, saving presence which the church still articulates—especially thanks to the efforts of Gregory and his fellow Cappadocians—in terms of the twin doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation." See Daley, "Saint Gregory of Nazianzus as Pastor and Theologian," 115. Cf. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 235–70, esp. pp. 263–70. For the importance of this teaching as Gregory correcting the Trinitarian error of his father, see Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 183–87, and correcting the Trinitarian error of Eunomius, see Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 259–65.

[32] *Or*. 2.55 (SC 247.164); trans. Browne and Swallow, 217; cf. Gal. 3: 13 and Matt. 8: 17.

[33] *Or*. 2.56.

[34] See esp. *Or*. 2.94–99.

[35] Cf. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, 119. On *Or*. 2, she says: "[W]hile Basil and Gregory of Nyssa reserved their critiques of the priesthood for personal correspondence or less direct discussion, Nazianzen often brought his complaints and accusations before a wider public." See Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church*, 123.

[36] *Or*. 2.95; cf. Rom. 12: 1.

habitation of Christ in the Spirit. Gregory asks that one traverse all the titles and powers of Christ, both those lofty ones that were originally Christ's and those lowly ones that he took for our sake. Gregory gives the following list taken from the Scriptures:

> God, the Son, the Image, the Word, the Wisdom, the Truth, the Light, the Life, the Power, the Vapor, the Emanation, the Effulgence, the Maker, the King, the Head, the Law, the Way, the Door, the Foundation, the Rock, the Pearl, the Peace, the Righteousness, the Sanctification, the Redemption, the Man, the Servant, the Shepherd, the Lamb, the High Priest, the Victim, the Firstborn before creation, the Firstborn from the dead, the Resurrection.[37]

The partaking of the Word (*koinōnēsas tōi logōi*) through these titles is specifically a prerequisite for priestly ministry, the service of making others divine. Interestingly, Jean Bernardi notes that three titles from this list seem not to be used by that fervent third-century student of Christ's titles, Origen. One of these three is *poiētēs*, here translated as "Maker."[38] The word also means "poet," or any "writer." This priestly partaking in the Word is for Gregory a share in divine poetics, the making of others to be like God. Finally, in this series of questions from *Or*. 2.95–99 about a candidate's readiness for the priesthood, one must not be like a mere infant fed with milk, but rather like a man able to take up Christ's cross, in order to be at the head of the fullness of Christ.[39]

Of those possible biblical models available to describe his particular story of fleeing ministry, Gregory features Jonah and relies upon an interpretation that he learned from an unnamed wise man.[40] Gregory understands Jonah's flight not as a matter of displeasure that the wicked people in Jonah would be saved, but that the prophet did not want to be an instrument of falsehood—so zealous was he for prophecy. Furthermore, Jonah knew that he could not escape from God. Rather, he saw that Israel would fall away, and that the grace of prophecy would be given to the Gentiles. On this account, Jonah came into sorrow's depths, and even called upon God in the whale; like Christ, he was delivered on the third day. Gregory then suggests that this vignette of Jonah's call distances himself from the Old Testament prophet. For, whereas, indulgence

[37] *Or*. 2.98 (SC 247.216–18); trans. Browne and Swallow, 224.

[38] The other two are *themelion* and *thyma*. See SC 247.219 n. 11.

[39] *Or*. 2.99.

[40] Cf. *Or*. 2.106–9. Could this unnamed man be Origen? See the note on the scholiast tradition in Browne and Swallow, 225 and Bernardi's note on Y. M. Duval's research in SC 247.226–27 n. 1. Yet, as Austin G. Murphy, O.S.B., has shown me, Origen, in his *Homilies on Ezekiel* 6.2, does not uphold Jonah as a model, but, rather, as an anti-model for successive prophets (who would learn from the repercussions of Jonah's disobedience). As for other features of biblical figures, see esp. Gregory's use of Paul in *Or*. 2.51–56. Cf. discussion in Chap. 2 of this volume on Paul, as a scriptural precedent for Gregory's autobiography.

could be given to Jonah for this reason, Gregory himself could offer little excuse to disobey his duty.[41]

Finding that the Scriptures give a mixed report about how those called to ministry answered the Lord (Aaron was eager while Moses reluctant; Isaiah submitted while Jeremiah was afraid), Gregory casts himself in Christ's own role of fulfilling prophecy: "'Therefore I do not disobey nor do I contradict,' says my Lord, when instead of being called to rule, he was led as a sheep to the slaughter."[42] Gregory presents himself as ready for the undertaking in continued Christological terms:

> You have us, pastors and fellow-pastors; you have us, you priestly flock, worthy of Christ the Chief Shepherd; you have us utterly vanquished, o father, and your subject according to the laws of Christ, rather than according to those of the land: you have obedience, reward it with a blessing.[43]

Gregory concludes his oration on the priesthood with an elaborate Christological prayer and praise. Among his many scriptural quotations, Gregory invokes him "who made both one." On the one hand, this is a phrase borrowed from Eph. 2: 14 which points to the unitive effect for all people from Christ's crucifixion. On the other hand, Gregory affirms elsewhere that it is Christ's Incarnation which made both divinity and humanity one.[44] Gregory may very well have intended both aspects. Knowing that he must restore the unity of Christians in Christ, Gregory ends by envisioning how both shepherds and sheep will together say: glory "in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom belongs all glory forever and ever. Amen."[45]

CHRIST IN THE MODELS OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

Because of God's blending with humanity, Gregory can present human models of divine action for the people's benefit. Christians make present and extend what Christ himself does in the saving mysteries. In Chapter 1 we saw how Gregory presents select lives of those close to him, such as his sister Gorgonia, as portraits illustrative of living by the Word. Here we consider specifically contemporary models of ordained ministry. Without a doubt, the model Gregory most showcases is himself, but he also upholds other models of Christlike ministry.

[41] *Or*. 2. 110.

[42] *Or*. 2.115 (SC 247.236); trans. Browne and Swallow, 227 (alt.); cf. Isa. 50: 5 and 53: 7.

[43] *Or*. 2.116 (SC 247.238); trans. Browne and Swallow, 227 (alt.). For a description of the *patria potestas* relevant here, see Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church*, 192–95.

[44] In this oration, see *Or*. 2.23.

[45] *Or*. 2.117 (SC 247.240); trans. Browne and Swallow, 227 (alt.).

For example, in *Ep*. 171, Gregory relies upon his cousin Amphilochius, bishop of Iconium, to pray for him during the liturgy. Because of its importance for understanding Gregory's theology of the Word in priestly ministry, the letter will be given in its entirety with brief comments. Gregory begins: "Scarcely yet delivered from the pains of my illness, I hasten to you, the guardian of my cure. For the tongue of a priest philosophizing on the Lord raises the sick." Gregory expresses great confidence in Amphilochius as one who models the ideal priesthood—philosophizing on the Lord. Because of this activity, the priest has healing powers. "Do then the greater thing in your priestly works," Gregory says, "and loose the great mass of my sins when you lay hold of the sacrifice of resurrection." Here we see that the priest's act of leading the Eucharist, called "the sacrifice of the resurrection," can provide Gregory's soul relief. Gregory then reflects back on his cousin's healing ministry in letter writing: "For your affairs are a care to me waking or sleeping, and you are to me a good plectrum, and have made a well-tuned lyre to dwell within my soul, because by your numerous letters you have trained my soul to full knowledge." Finally, Gregory closes this concise letter with an urgent appeal for prayer: "But, most reverend one, cease not both to pray and plead for me when you draw down the Word by your word, when with a bloodless cutting you sever the body and blood of the Lord, using your voice for the sword."[46] The voice of Amphilochius, Gregory's own sacerdotal model, effects the unbloody division of Christ's body and blood. Such is the awesome authority of priestly ministry.

This example from one of Gregory's letters prepares us for Gregory's attention to the exemplary Christomorphic ministry of other bishops. His two orations on Athanasius and Basil celebrate, *inter alia*, their exemplary service in Christ.[47] In those orations, as in his letter to Amphilochius, Gregory's voice speaking about himself in the relationship of another minister with Christ will be repeatedly heard.

Writing on Athanasius, Gregory describes the bishop of Alexandria as the epitome of virtue.[48] Gregory goes so far as to say that when the Letter of the Hebrews describes the great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, that shows Athanasius. Gregory explains, "For I dare to say even this, since Scripture can say 'Christs' for those who live according to Christ."[49] For example, Gregory depicts an important event in Athanasius's life in the

[46] *Ep*. 171 (Gallay, *Lettres* 2.60–61); trans. Browne and Swallow, 469 (alt.).

[47] For these orations, see George Demacopoulos, "Leadership in the Post-Constantinian Church According to St. Gregory Nazianzen," *Louvain Studies* 30 (2005): 214–28, at p. 225; cf. Demacopoulos, *Five Models of Spiritual Direction in the Early Church* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 51–81.

[48] Gregory begins *Or*. 21.1 by making Athanasius identical with virtue, which is given by God to make humans like himself.

[49] *Or*. 21.10 (SC 270.128); trans. Browne and Swallow, 272 (alt.); cf. Ps. 105: 15.

terms of Christ's mysteries. When Athanasius returns to Alexandria after an exile, he rides upon a colt and is welcomed with branches and garments. Gregory says that this was almost like "my Jesus" who rode upon another colt, in reference to the triumphal entry into Jerusalem.[50] Gregory says that, whereas children shouted acclaims of Christ in the Gospel, all in the crowd vied to outdo one another in joy for the coming of Athanasius.[51] Upon his restoration, Athanasius also imitated Christ in cleansing the temple of those who trafficked in the things of Christ. But a difference sets Athanasius apart from Christ here. Whereas Christ did this with a whip, Athanasius used persuasive speech.[52] The most glorious of all Athanasius's work was his faith in Christ, when all others, or nearly all, failed. According to Gregory, Athanasius was the first to articulate in clear writing the orthodox faith in the unity of the divinity and essence of the Trinity, recognizing the Holy Spirit with the same honor as earlier Fathers had recognized the Son.[53] Proclaiming this Trinitarian faith was, as we have already seen, at the very heart of Gregory's own pastoral ministry.

In the panegyric on Basil, written perhaps three years after his friend's death, Gregory describes Basil's ministry in a way that conforms Basil to *Gregory's* Christ.[54] Several of Gregory's most lavish accounts of his friendship with Basil occur after Basil's death.[55] As Gregory complains that Basil used

[50] *Or*. 21.29; cf. Matt. 21: 1–9, 14–16; Mark 11: 1–10; Luke 19: 28–40; and John 12: 12–19.

[51] *Or*. 21.29; cf. Matt. 21: 15. Cf. Jaclyn Maxwell, "The Attitudes of Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus toward Uneducated Christians," *Studia Patristica* 47 (2010): 117–22, at pp. 121–22.

[52] *Or*. 21.31.

[53] *Or*. 21.33. For a comparison arguing that Gregory is not influenced by Athanasius, see Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 277–83. Beeley explains, "The vague similarities between them have been long overemphasized. Much more important is the fact that Gregory *portrays* himself as carrying forward Athanasius' legacy, as the bold champion of the Nicene faith in the Trinity (21.33) in the new imperial capital, the great reconciler of East and West (21.34), and a broker of peace between the rival factions in Antioch" (p. 283, original emphasis).

[54] In contrasting Gregory of Nyssa's funeral oration for his brother Basil with our Gregory's *Or*. 43, David Konstan suggests that, unlike Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus used mythological exempla and treated biblical parallels in a supposedly mythological pattern. See David Konstan, "How to Praise a Friend: St. Gregory of Nazianzus's Funeral Oration for St. Basil the Great," in *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, eds. Tomas Hägg and Philip Rousseau, The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 31 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 160–79, at p. 169. Although Konstan is right about detecting different approaches between the two orators on Basil, his characterization of biblical allusions for our Gregory seems misleading. Gregory of Nazianzus uses Christ, the premier biblical figure, to show divine intimacy in this world.

[55] See the examples of the *De vita sua*, *Or*. 43, and the ten epigrams to Basil in the Greek Anthology, Book VIII. (Gregory calls it a dozen epigrams in the eleventh epigram, but the first is not to Basil and there is no twelfth extant.) The second epigram in the collection, the first of the series on Basil, begins in this way in one translation: "Methought, dear Basil, servant of Christ, that a body could sooner live without a soul than myself without thee." See *The Greek Anthology*, vol. 2, trans. W. R. Paton, Loeb series (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 401. In this collection, Basil is thus inseparably Gregory's and inseparably Christ's. The fourth epigram

him during life for administrative gain, so too one could argue that Gregory uses Basil after the latter's death for theological gain. The following focuses on two aspects of Basil's ministry: his work concerning poverty and his confrontation against worldly powers.

In Basil's own practice of poverty, Gregory says that his friend followed "the great precept of my Christ, who assumed the poverty of the flesh for our sake that we might be enriched with divinity."[56] When describing Basil's service to the poor in scriptural terms, Gregory both contrasts him, and likens him, to Christ. By way of dissimilarity, Basil could not multiply five loaves to feed many thousands, as did "my God."[57] By way of similarity, Basil cared for the poor with his own hands, "imitating the ministry of Christ, who, girded with a towel, did not disdain to wash the feet of his disciples."[58] Basil, above all others, urged us not to despise our fellow human beings or to dishonor Christ, the one Head of all of us, by our inhumanity.[59] Indeed, to Gregory, Basil was better than Joseph in relieving the famine of the Israelites, because Basil had only one goal: winning mercy by being merciful, echoing Christ's beatitude of Matt. 5: 7.[60] Yet, Gregory has us know that, even greater than Basil's generosity in feeding the poor, was his lavish distribution of the Word, which is the bread of angels.[61]

Confronting two evil leaders of the world, Basil appears in his episcopal ministry to be acting out mysteries of Christ's life. Gregory describes in some detail the encounter between the unorthodox Emperor Valens and the holy bishop during a festal liturgy.[62] Upon looking at Basil, described as attached to God and the altar, the emperor is overcome in dizzy awe. It does not seem coincidental that this manifestation of Basil's divine power occurred on the feast of Epiphany. Moreover, when the emperor hears Basil speak to him, Gregory says that Basil spoke the utterances of God.[63] In the next comparison between Basil and Christ, Gregory sets the scene of Basil defending the honor

depicts the dead Basil in the manner of Christ asleep on the boat: "Awake, and by thy words and by thy ministry make the tossing to cease" (Paton 2.401). The seventh epigram states, "A little time didst thou still breathe on earth, but gavest all thou hadst to Christ, thy soul, thy body, thy speech, thy hands, Basil, the great glory of Christ, the bulwark of the priestly order, and now even more the bulwark of the truth so rent by schism" (Paton 2.401).

[56] *Or*. 43.61 (SC 384.258); trans. McCauley, 79 (alt.); cf. 2 Cor. 8: 9.

[57] *Or*. 43.35.

[58] *Or*. 43.35 (SC 384.204); trans. McCauley, 58.

[59] *Or*. 43.63.

[60] *Or*. 43.36. Gregory also expresses Basil's object as acquiring heaven's blessings by distributing earthly grain. For many *synkriseis* between Basil and scriptural figures (including Joseph again), see *Or*. 43.70–76; cf. Gen. 41: 1–45: 28.

[61] *Or*. 43.36; Ps. 78: 24.

[62] *Or*. 43.52.

[63] McGuckin wryly comments, "Gregory's suspenseful version of the tale is a most clever device of distracting our attention from the obvious facts that both Basil and Gregory felt happy enough on the occasion to enter into communion with Valens, an heretical Arian, at their liturgy." See McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 185–86.

of a woman who sought safety from him against an unjust judge. That judge had Basil brought before him. Gregory describes the scene in the terms of "my Jesus before the judgment seat of Pilate."[64] The judge ordered that Basil's pallium be taken from him, and Basil offered to strip himself of his tunic. Then the judge threatened to lash the bishop, now described as the "fleshless one," a term Gregory uses elsewhere for the Word before the Incarnation.[65] Basil bowed his back and quipped that such a laceration would cure his liver. When the people of the city heard of this injustice against Basil, they rose up and laid hands on the judge, who then became Basil's suppliant. Described as a martyr without blood, Basil saved his persecutor through the power of God, a power spilling over from the pages of Scripture into Basil's life.[66]

Granted that he extols others, such as Athanasius and Basil, as ideal ministers, Gregory most frequently presents himself as an exemplar of Christ-like ministry. For example, Gregory dedicates his first three orations, in varying ways, to his return to Nazianzus to take up priestly ministry. All three have a Christomorphic dimension. At the beginning of this chapter, we considered, in brief, the Christology of Gregory's *Or*. 2, and in the previous chapter we saw that *Or*. 1 blends the celebration of Pascha with Gregory's own beginning of the priesthood. However, his first preaching apparently did not meet a warm reception. Many manuscripts bear a rather lengthy title for *Or*. 3, reflecting on the earlier experience: "To those who called him at the beginning, but who did not meet with the priest at the Pascha."[67] Gregory compares this situation to the parable of the wedding banquet given for the host's son. Read in the context of the Gospel account, Matt. 22: 1–14 implies that God is the host and the bridegroom is Christ. But Gregory suggests that his father, whom he mentions with himself in the sentence previous to introducing the parable, is the host and he himself is the bridegroom. Gregory then departs from the parable's template to show how, in this case, it is his audience who invited him to the wedding, yet they themselves deserted him for several inadequate excuses. They, in fact, cared little for the bridal chamber and the bridegroom. Judging that perhaps he was too harsh in this assessment, Gregory then praises the people of his birthplace, which he calls "little Bethlehem among the cities, where Christ was born."[68] In these instances, and in his continuous attention

[64] *Or*. 43.56 (SC 384.244); trans. McCauley, 73.

[65] *Or*. 43.57; cf. *Or*. 38.2 and *Carm*. 2.1.38.27. His remark here in *Or*. 43 not only suggests Basil's asceticism, but also Basil's conformity to Christ himself.

[66] Gregory shows the reasonableness of God acting in Basil's life, as God had earlier performed miracles in parting the sea and staying the Jordan River (cf. Exod. 14: 21–31 and Jos. 3: 7–17).

[67] SC 247.242. For a study of *Or*. 3 as a judicial speech modeled on Aristides's *Or*. 33, see Milovanović, "Sailing to Sophistopolis," 203–9. Because of the similarity of themes with some of Gregory's later orations, she finds it hard to believe the traditional presupposition that Gregory wrote this oration as an early speech in his career.

[68] *Or*. 3.6 (SC 247.248); trans. Browne and Swallow, 228. Cf. Demoen, "Some Remarks on the Life and Poems of Gregory Nazianzen," 173–74.

to the power of his *logos*, Gregory continues to cast the identity of his priesthood in the light of Christ.

After his episcopal ordination in 372, Gregory again gives sustained attention to ordained ministry. These orations take on a greater Pneumatological cast, which Beeley expertly interprets.[69] Gregory's blend between Christ and himself for the sake of ministry retains some prominence. For example, *Or*. 12, written after a flight following being made bishop, recounts how Gregory takes up responsibilities not in Sasima, the see for which he was ordained, but rather next to his father in Nazianzus. Gregory begins *Or*. 12 with his total dedication to the Holy Spirit, and professes both to speak, and to be silent, at the will of the Trinity, described as the Mind, the Word, and the Spirit.[70] His oration then falls into two parts based upon the two audiences: first, his father and then the people. When speaking to the latter, addressed as friends and brethren, he communicates his characteristic tension between contemplation and action.[71] Although desirous of contemplation, Gregory is led by the Spirit toward helping others in the common good and presenting God's image, cleansed in them, back to God. Emphasizing the great number of people who need his pastoral care, Gregory gives various comparisons: a park is better than a tree, the whole heaven better than a star, and the body better than a limb. The conclusion is that Gregory must not look solely after his own interest, but rather after the whole Church. In doing so, he takes Christ as his pastoral example.[72] Christ could have remained secure in his own honor and deity, but he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave (cf. Phil. 2: 7). He even endured the cross, putting death to death by his death. Gregory thus evokes Christ's own kenosis as a model for his ministry, assuming this human life of work and death for the sake of the Church.

CHRIST IN THE ANTI-MODELS OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

Gregory not only offers a view of a Christlike ministry through models such as Athanasius, Basil, and himself; he often contrasts this presentation with anti-models in other Church leaders, such as those who gathered in council at

[69] See esp. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 156–60.

[70] *Or*. 12.1.

[71] For one important treatment of theory and praxis in Gregory, see Tomáš Špidlík, S.J., *Grégoire de Nazianze: Introduction à l'étude de sa doctrine spirituelle* (Rome: Pontifical Institute of Oriental Studies, 1971). Špidlík gives three relations between theory and praxis in "La Theoria et la praxis chez Gregoire de Nazianze," *Studia Patristica* 14 (1976): 358–64.

[72] *Or*. 12.4. Cf. Brian Matz, "Philippians 2: 7 as Pastoral Example in Gregory Nazianzen's *Oration* 12," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 49 (2004): 279–90.

Constantinople beginning in May 381.[73] Having been recognized as the archbishop of the city by Emperor Theodosius, Gregory would play a key role in the gathering of bishops from the East called by the emperor. When the presider of the council, Meletius of Antioch, died at some point after the opening sessions, Gregory assumed leadership. But the task proved to be beyond Gregory's control. Factions fought against one another on such matters as the Antiochene schism (a tear within the Nicene community itself perpetuated, rather than healed, after the death of Meletius) and on more properly doctrinal concerns, such as articulating Christ's Incarnation and the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Having been originally consecrated for Sasima, Gregory himself was accused of being improperly installed on the episcopal throne of Constantinople. For his part, Gregory was appalled by the immoral conduct and theological ineptitude of the other bishops. From this whirlwind of controversy, weighed down now by illness, Gregory retreated—never to return to Constantinople again. When asked to go back to the city for a synod the following year, Gregory declined, because he said he did not see any good coming from gatherings of bishops![74] He also continued to give the reason of illness, a frequent complaint and excuse for not meeting people.[75] While some may consider this final extended retreat of his life to be a forsaking of active engagement in the Church, others more perceptively find that Gregory's literary campaigns from seclusion kept him very much active in Church affairs, and in a way that was to Gregory's advantage.[76] The following suggests how Gregory portrays an anti-Christology through descriptions of his episcopal rivals.[77] For just as Gregory's own life presents the life of Christ, so the lives of his enemies in the Church present us with images that contradict Christ's life.

Gregory complains bitterly, in his farewell to the bishops, about how the bishops have misused their authority as shepherds to oppose one another and

[73] In the literature on Gregory's critique against the clergy, see esp. the three brief studies in *Vescovi e pastori in epoca Teodosiana: in occasione del XVI centenario della consecrazione episcopale di S. Agostin, 396–1996*, Part 2: *Padri greci e latini*. Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 58 (Rome: Augustinianum, 1997) of: Andrew Louth, "St. Gregory Nazianzen on Bishops and the Episcopate" (pp. 281–85), Kristoffel Demoen, "Acteurs de Pantomimes, Trafiquants du Christ, Flatteurs de Femmes . . . Les Évêques dans les Poèmes Autobiographiques de Grégoire de Nazianze," (pp. 287–97), and Neil B. McLynn, "The Voice of Conscience: Gregory Nazianzen in Retirement" (pp. 299–308). Although the attention in this monograph is now turned to the council meeting in 381, we might also consider how Gregory's affection for Basil as a model pastor was matched only by his criticisms against Basil's ministerial decisions.

[74] See *Ep.* 130.1–2 (Gallay, *Lettres* 2.19–20).

[75] See *Ep.* 131. Cf. Bradley K. Storin, "The Sick Self in the Letters of Gregory of Nazianzus," paper delivered at the North American Patristics Society annual meeting on May 21, 2009.

[76] For pastoral dimensions of Gregory's autobiographical poetry, see esp. Abrams Rebillard, "Speaking for Salvation."

[77] For Gregory's resentment against his episcopal successor in Constantinople, Nectarius, see McGuckin, "Autobiography as Apologia."

the people.[78] They have created divisions by focusing their attention on names other than the only name that matters. Gregory says, "I am ashamed of my years, if I should be labeled with the name of others when I am saved by Christ!"[79] Gregory contrasts the ambition and fickleness of the episcopate with his own example that seems so at variance with everyone else's. Gregory likens himself to a classical philosopher accused of idiocy, and to Christ's disciple thought to be full of new wine because of the Spirit's power at work in him (cf. Acts 2: 13).[80] The other bishops simply cannot understand the true philosophy of following Christ.

Gregory's retirement after his departure from the capital city gave him ample time to write lines of poetry, not a few related to his exasperation at the non-Christian teachings and actions of his fellow ministers in Constantinople.[81] The following considers only two poems, and focuses only on this theme of a conflict with other ministers based in Gregory's Christomorphic ministry.

In his *De vita sua*, Gregory gives a vivid description of the turmoil raised by the Council of Constantinople. This event, described with details meant to shock, concludes the long autobiography. Following the death of Meletius, when the rancorous bishops looked to Gregory for leadership, he accedes to their request with the hope of making peace among them.[82] He invokes the Logos in his recounting the truth of his effort.[83] Although he tried to make peace by blending the opposing factions into himself (like Christ), Gregory claims that this frightful division exceeded all others in history. It surpassed even the separation of Israel, caused by what Gregory calls "Christ-slaying anger."[84] Gregory addresses the hypocritical bishops by reminding them that what is at stake is far more than the disputed episcopal throne of Antioch, although that is what concerns them. In the midst of his speech, Gregory offers himself as the model of following Christ's passion for all:

> But for me the issue concerns greater, more important matters.
> Look at this earth's great sphere
> Sealed with streams of precious blood,
> Since God suffered in human form
> And gave himself as compensation to save us.[85]

[78] For the significance of this oration as a certificate of discharge, see Susanna Elm, "Inventing the 'Father of the Church': Gregory of Nazianzus' 'Farewell to the Bishops' (*Or*. 42) in its Historical Context."

[79] *Or*. 42.21 (SC 384.96); trans. Daley, 21.

[80] *Or*. 42.22.

[81] Neil McLynn argues that some rough edges in Gregory's poetry could be better explained by haste in publication rather than as private musings left to be discovered after Gregory's death. See McLynn, "The Voice of Conscience: Gregory Nazianzen in Retirement," 299–308.

[82] *De vita sua* 1525–40.

[83] *De vita sua* 1527 (Jungck, 128; White, 122). Meehan, 119, interprets the vocative, *loge*, correctly as addressing Christ the Word. White, 123, translates it as "my account."

[84] *De vita sua* 1545 (Jungck, 128; White, 122).

[85] *De vita sua* 1599–1603 (Jungck, 132; White 128); trans. White, 129.

Gregory's impassioned plea for peace was met by screams from all around. Gregory sarcastically remarks on the excellence of one group's reasoning that the East should have superiority against the West because the Incarnation occurred in the East.[86] Exasperated by such conceit, Gregory explains that Christ's flesh signals the first-fruits of the whole human race. Besides, if it was in the East where Christ was fittingly born, then it was also there that he was more easily put to death. From this death, the resurrection followed and thence salvation.[87] Gregory contrasts the council's gathering with those bishops meeting in Nicaea (325) which unified the holy nature of the Trinity. He then uses a mixture image to criticize those gathered in Constantinople:

> I will accept the great mob of Christ-traders
> When someone is able to blend filth
> With the fragrance of pure myrrh.[88]

Gregory, who fervently believes in the power of mixtures to combine opposites, will not contaminate himself with the council's sin against Christ himself.

Gregory composed the other poem, *Carm.* 2.1.13, *Against the Bishops*, in 217 lines of hexameters.[89] He opens by extolling the dignity of those he writes against. They are priests offering bloodless sacrifices, Christbearers, but they do not live up to the roles they play.[90] Gregory finds that they attack him as an evil and effeminate man; yet it is they who disturb the great body of Christ, the people.[91] He recalls how God won this people by being mixed with humanity in the unity of the Incarnation and shedding his divine blood. Yet, the evildoer who first deceived Adam now attacks the leaders of the people, for when the leaders fall, so will all the people, just as all on a ship will meet disaster when deprived of the pilot.[92] The devil deceives so many leaders that Gregory imagines a herald calling all those wretchedly unworthy to the episcopal office to assume it.[93] Because Gregory realizes the awesome purity required to minister, he turns to Christ the King and falls at his feet. He prays, as one weary of the wolves attacking his flock and contending for the holy throne. In

[86] *De vita sua* 1690–93. [87] *De vita sua* 1694–1702.

[88] *De vita sua* 1756–58 (Jungck, 138–140; White, 138); trans. White, 139. The epithet *christemporos* for Christ-trading is quite rare in Greek literature, perhaps having a previous appearance only in *Didache* 12. Cf. John T. Cummings, "Lexical Notes on St. Gregory Nazianzen," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 9 (1968): 183–91, at p. 191.

[89] PG 37.1227–28 translates *Eis episkopous* in Latin as *Ad episcopos*, and Abrams Rebillard, "Speaking for Salvation," 241 renders it *On the Bishops*, but the *Eis* seems adversarial here.

[90] *Carm.* 2.1.13.1–13. For a study of the term *christophoroi* (and *pneumatophoroi)*, see Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*, 57–60. On p. 60, Rapp mentions that Gregory of Nazianzus calls his own mother *christophoros* (*Greek Anthology* 8.29), which is not surprising from what we have seen in Gregory's Christomorphic autobiography. That Gregory especially thinks of Nonna as *his* mother (more than of Gorgonia and Caesarius), see the epigram that follows this epigram 29 in the *Greek Anthology*.

[91] *Carm.* 2.1.13.26–32. [92] *Carm.* 2.1.13.43–55. [93] *Carm.* 2.1.13.75–115.

the midst of their contentions, God incarnate escapes their notice.[94] Christ died in vain, for people are called not after him, but after mere mortals.[95] Nothing seems to matter anymore; evil is the one law. All things are alike: Christ is equated as on the same level with a mortal, sun, star, light, shadow, etc.[96] Gregory closes his poem with an invocation of God's hand and the final judgment. While others may follow the wrong path, Gregory seeks out Noah's ark to escape from a bitter end.[97] Gregory thus exposes the corruption among his fellow bishops, who seem to nullify Christ's salvation and return the Church to the wickedness of those who lived during the days of Noah.

Much more could be said about how Gregory depicts his enemies among the clergy as anti-models of Christomorphic ministry. He is quite free in his criticism! But from these few considerations, we turn to Gregory's portrals of Christ in specific ministries to segments within the Church. By doing so, we see how Gregory writes of the form of Christ in terms of ministry to those in the married and virginal states of life as well as to the rich and poor.

CHRIST IN GREGORY'S MINISTRY CONCERNING MARRIAGE AND VIRGINITY

We can begin thinking about Gregory's Christomorphic ministry both to the married and to those dedicated to a life of celibacy through two complementary poems. The first is called *On the different walks of life*. Because our human life is a mixture prone to all sorts of vicissitudes, Gregory sees that one can receive God's blessings by remaining focused on the end. Like the author of Ecclesiastes, he surveys the transiency of all things, but sees in this something other than simply vanity. He prays to Christ:

> And this, Creator Word, is of your wisdom, that instability
> Should be in everything, so we might have a love (ἔρον) for what is stable.
> I've surveyed everything on wings of the mind, both things ancient
> And new; and nothing is as feeble as we humans are.
> There's one thing good and safe for human beings:
> To leave here bearing a cross[98]

Only by bearing our cross with our mind set in passionate love for divine things, will we be purified and come into another life.

Never wavering from that focus, Gregory expresses something similar in the poem that immediately follows in the Maurist collection of his moral poems.

[94] *Carm*. 2.1.13.152. [95] *Carm*. 2.1.13.155–57.
[96] *Carm*. 2.1.13.175–76. [97] *Carm*. 2.1.13.205–6.
[98] *Carm*. 1.2.16.29–34 (PG 37.780–81); trans. Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 146 (alt.).

In his *Blessings of various lives*, Gregory pronounces heavenly favor upon contrasting lifestyles.[99] Gregory blesses, first, the solitary life, unmixed with the worldly, and also the life in the midst of people, but directly wholly to God. He blesses those who purchase Christ by giving away all belongings and receiving only the cross. He also blesses those who administer possessions so as to extend God's hand to the needy. He blesses joyous celibates, but he also blesses the married, who give more love to Christ than to each other. He blesses the one with authority in the Church, bringing Christ by holy and great sacrifices. He also blesses the one who is a child of the flock, a most perfect nursling, keeping the place of the heavenly Christ. Gregory blesses the one with an active mind, and also the one with active hands. He pronounces his final blessing upon one who summarizes chief features of the Christian life: poor in passions, leading a life of repentance, hungering for celestial food, exercising kindness and mercy, found to be a friend of peace and pure of heart, "who, for the sake of the great-famed Christ, has endured many sufferings, and will find great honor."[100]

Gregory turns to his readers in pastoral counsel to follow the various blessed ways, whichever they prefer. He makes it clear that it is better to be unmarried, but earthly-minded virginity is inferior to sober marriage. Elaborating upon the narrow way of Matt. 7: 13–14, Gregory says that many paths lead into that one way. Just as no single common food pleases all, so too no single way of life suits all Christians. This may very well be in direct challenge to those who gave an exclusive privilege to ascetic discipline for salvation.[101] He returns to what is best in general terms for all: tears, vigils, labors, restraining passions, conquering excess, being under Christ's strong hand, and trembling at the day that will come upon us. If you do these things, you are no longer mortal, but one of the heavenly host, according to Gregory's laws.[102] Thus, while highlighting what is best, Gregory wants to show how the life of Christ is available for people of all sorts of life and level of spiritual commitment. In doing so, Gregory demonstrates remarkable pastoral sensitivity, exemplifying in the process what a priest needs for ministering among different kinds of people according to *Or*. 2.9–34.

Gregory's ministerial gifts for people of different ways of life, evidenced in the two poems just considered, particularly shine in the strikingly Christological

[99] *Carm.* 1.2.17. Studying its literary characteristics, Simelidis finds that Gregory may have modeled this poem on the erotic verses of Theognis, borrowing various elements of style, but replacing pederastic content with a Christian appreciation for various lives. See Christos Simelidis, *Selected Poems of Gregory of Nazianzus*, Hypomnemata 177 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 118–19.

[100] *Carm*. 1.2.17.31–32 (PG 37.784); trans. Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 148.

[101] Simelidis, *Selected Poems of Gregory of Nazianzus*, 122 finds that Gregory emphasizes the variety of acceptable Christian lifestyles in several writings, such as in *Or*. 14, 19, 32, and 37.

[102] *Carm*. 1.2.17.65–66.

Or. 37, whose opening we studied in Chapter 1. Gregory interprets in the oration's first four chapters the first two verses of Matt. 19: 1–12, with great attention to the person and the significance of Christ. The remaining chapters consider the issues at stake in Matt. 19: 3–12 as they affect the married and the different classes the Gospel calls "eunuchs." Gregory takes issue with the discrimination against women in the Mosaic Law, which to him exemplifies a sexist attitude that still endures among Christians of Gregory's time. Gregory says that legislation burdening women was made by men, but God cares for both men and women equally. In answer to his opponents' inquiries trying to fault women, Gregory says that both Adam and Eve sinned. One was not worse than the other; one was not weaker than the other. Most importantly, Christ saved both by his passion. He was made flesh not only for the man, but also for the woman. He died, not only for the man, but also for the woman. Stemming from the seed of David, he is, nevertheless, born of a virgin. Both man and woman have equal honor. Elaborating on Paul's imagery of the man and woman as symbolic of Christ and the Church, Gregory stresses the reciprocal obligation on both the husband and the wife.[103]

Gregory then applies a basic principle of his Christological doctrine to marriage practice.[104] There is only one Christ. Since Christ is one, not two, there should not be two husbands or two wives. There should be only one flesh (between one man and one woman), and so there should not be a union resulting in a second flesh. Gregory gives a categorization of possible remarriages that would later influence Byzantine marriage legislation: the first is law, the second indulgence, the third transgression, and anything beyond that is the life of a pig.[105]

Gregory expressly counters the Pharisees of the Gospel and those he considers to be Pharisees of his day by affirming that it is good to marry. Although it is not higher than virginity, marriage is still honorable. Gregory gives the basic principle that virginity would not be great if it were not better than marriage, which is already good. Both the mother and the virgin should be honored. Gregory says that the married woman should, in some degree, belong to Christ, while the virgin is altogether Christ's. More important than these states Gregory wants the mind to be virginal.[106] Gregory explains that he

[103] *Or*. 37.7.

[104] For a Christological principle about a wedding in Gregory's self-referential mixture language, see *Ep*. 232. Although not invited to a certain wedding, Gregory says that he will be present. Then he says that one of the most beautiful things is for Christ to be present at the wedding, and where Christ is, there is orderly behavior. Water becomes wine, for everything can be transformed into something better. He then warns that things that must not be mixed should not be mingled. Providing various examples, his point is that the marriage of Christians should be one of dignity/seriousness (*semnotēs*).

[105] Cf. McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 334–35.

[106] *Or*. 37.10.

addresses both men and women when he speaks of the virgin as one who longs for the beauty of the Bridegroom and expresses desire only for him. Such desire can flow upward, like water in pipes, when it is pushed and contained in a single direction. If virgins channel their desires, they will remain Christ's until they, at last, see their Bridegroom.[107]

As one reads this work, it becomes increasingly clear that Gregory's priority is the state of one's mind and its union with Christ, not one's particular state of life. The fact that someone is a eunuch does not make that person holy. Again, Gregory uses images such as water to communicate his message. If someone is a eunuch by nature, as Christ mentions in Matt. 19: 12, then his behavior is like water falling, merely demonstrating the property given by the Creator. Merit only comes about by one's will, when one's reason takes wings to fly up from carnal chains. Eunuchs must have chaste minds and right faith concerning the Trinity. Gregory says that now that they have been wedded to Christ, they ought not to dishonor him.[108] Suggesting again the unity of Trinitarian and Christological thinking, he states that one must not honor the Father by dishonoring the Son, nor dishonor the Holy Spirit so as to honor the Son. Eunuchs, and all Christians, must give equal honor to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and so become chaste in respect to the Godhead.[109]

For our final example of ministry concerning marriage and virginity, we turn to Gregory's celebrated poem in 732 hexameters, *In praise of virginity*.[110] In some ways reminiscent of a Homeric hymn, this poem recounts a competition between marriage and virginity which present their respective cases after preliminary discussions about the dignity of virginity, creation, and Christ's redemption.[111] The poem concludes with Christ's declaration of the winner. *In praise of virginity* demonstrates Gregory's pastoral concern for promoting virginity, while, at the same time, honoring marriage. Prominently featuring a Christocentric spirituality in its discussions of these states of life, the poem deserves our close attention.[112]

[107] *Or*. 37.12. [108] *Or*. 37. 17. [109] *Or*. 37.18.

[110] *Carm*. 1.2.1. For the fourth-century prominence of this poem among Gregory's works, see Jerome's recognition in *On illustrious men*, 117. This long poem is followed in Gregory's *Carmina moralia* by the lengthy "Precepts for Virgins," whose following lines are featured in Maximus the Confessor's *Ambigua* 71: "For the Logos on high plays in all sorts of forms | Mingling with his world here and there as he so desires" (*Carm*. 1.2.2; PG 37.624–25). This selection is translated and studied in Paul M. Blowers, "On the 'Play' of Divine Providence in Gregory Nazianzen and Maximus the Confessor," in *Re-reading Gregory of Nazianzus*, ed. Christopher A. Beeley, 199–217, esp. at p. 200. The Logos at "play" is unusual, (cf. Prov 8: 30–1) but the "mingling" is quite typical of Gregory's rhetoric about Christ.

[111] For a comparison with Homeric hymns, see the introduction of *Gregory von Nazianz: Der Rangstreit zwischen Ehe und Jungfräulichkeit (Carmen 1,2,1,215–732)*, introduction and commentary by Klaus Sundermann, Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums, new series, 9 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1991), 1.

[112] Other texts concerning virginity could be chosen. For Gregory's positions in select letters and poetry within a study on female asceticism in fourth-century Asia Minor, see Susanna Elm,

Gregory's call to wreathe virginity in the poem's first line suggests that a victory has been won, but one would not know, at first, that virginity is competing against marriage. Gregory hails virginity with sundry exalted titles, including that of "Christ's portion." Virginity's distinction derives from no less an origin than heaven, in God and the angels. Gregory writes, "The first virgin is the pure Trinity."[113] The angels, God's first creatures, are also without marriage. Marriage did not come into existence until the creation of the first human beings. Interestingly, unlike the second-century traditions that hold Adam and Eve were mere children, Gregory's poem suggests that the two had sexual relations before the fall.[114] Gregory says that the greatest marvel of the all-wise Word was his creation of a woman from the side of the first human, which Gregory sees as "my root."[115] Gregory continues:

> He removed from his side a sole rib, and built it into
> A woman, and mixing in desire in their breast,
> He let them both loose to embrace each other;
> Not always, however, nor with everyone, but he set a limit to their desires,
> That which they call marriage, a rein for matter's want of measure.[116]

Christ, the Creator Word, had compassion on the human race after Adam and Eve sinned. He did what was unimaginable: he took flesh in the holy womb of a virgin, mingling with humanity as a second mixture. Gregory continues at some length in amazement at Christ's compassion for the human race, shown by his Incarnation, cross, and glorification into another life. Returning to the topic of virginity, Gregory explains that virginity belongs to that other life of glory. Marriage is of this world, a first draft sketching out what is to come. Virginity, Christ's inheritance, is an anticipation of that which is to come, with all its vibrant colors. Using the rhetoric of *synkriseis*, Gregory says that virginity is as superior to marriage as soul is to the flesh, heaven is to earth, and God is to the human. Furthermore, Gregory describes virgins as Christ-bearing and serving the cross while being dead to the world and caring only for the things of heaven. Gregory then recounts speeches by married women and by Virginity personified.[117] Clearly, one is favored over the other in Gregory's introductory presentation.

'Virgins of God': The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity, Oxford Classical Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 154–61.

[113] *Carm*. 1.2.1.20 (PG 37.523); trans. Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 89 (alt.).

[114] Cf. Irenaeus, *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, 12 and his *Adversus haereses* 3.22.4, 4.38.1–4; Theophilus of Antioch *Ad Autol*. 2.25; and Clement of Alexandria *Protr*. 11.111.1. See *St. Irenaeus: Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, trans. and annotated by Joseph P. Smith, S.J., Ancient Christian Writers 16 (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1952), 150 n. 70.

[115] *Carm*. 1.2.1.105.

[116] *Carm*. 1.2.1.107–111 (PG 37.530); trans. Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 92.

[117] The speech of the married take up lines 220–341; Virginity's address appears in lines 355–727.

The married address their audience as beloved children of the institution, and recognize that the Father's Child gave marriage as an ordinance from the time Eve was formed from Adam's side. They go on to recount the various blessings provided in the world because of marriage, and state that this holy union does not estrange one from God, but gives one more of an incentive to be close to God.[118] The unmarried, on the other hand, could be driven from happiness as they are claimed to have no sympathy with the human race.[119] Marriage, for its part, gives birth to children who become witnesses of Christ's sufferings. For example, Abraham, father of cities and peoples, bound his son for Christ as a sacrifice.[120] In the recounting of other biblical heroes, such as the twelve apostles and Paul, the poem shows that marriage and Christ have given these to the human race.[121] In the end, the married emphasize that the unmarried come from marriage. Thus, those who are marriage's children should not compete against their parents in this contest of superiority in life.[122]

Gregory then summons Virginity to speak. He invoked her as God's gift to him once before, and asks her again to take her stand. Reluctantly, Virginity approaches the task with no care for the honors of this life, and she expresses one aim: full of love, to go from here to God. Virginity says that marriage is rightly considered to be the root and the beginning of the unmarried. However, the married are parents not of the soul, for that comes directly from God, but of the body. Moreover, just as the married claim to be parents of great saints, they are also parents of terrible sinners. Virginity claims that Marriage is divided, and those divided cannot attain unity. Like a carpenter who closes one eye so as to be able to gaze with the other eye in perfect precision, a virgin loves only Christ. Speaking of the soul's voyage of life, Virginity claims:

> Trembling, then, at this, I have all the more laid hold on Christ;
> And not only then, but even when the going is good, I desire all the same
> My Christ, my pure desire, who is steadfast to those who desire him. . . .
> For if Christ would transfix your mind from above with his arrow
> And would wound your midriff with his refreshing dart,
> Then, being initiated both ways into the mysteries of either kind of love,
> You would know how much sweeter the King's goad is.[123]

With a voice that Gregory uses for himself elsewhere about Christ as his joy, Virginity proclaims:

[118] *Carm*. 1.2.1.248–87. [119] *Carm*. 1.2.1.288–95.
[120] *Carm*. 1.2.1.311–12. [121] *Carm*. 1.2.1.329. [122] *Carm*. 1.2.1.339–41.
[123] *Carm*. 1.2.1.583–85, 588–91 (PG 37.566–67); trans. Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 113 (alt.). Gilbert's translation of line 591 reads, "you would know how much sweeter the Lord's good is." But "good" must be a typographical error in translating *kentron*, goad.

> The sole spouse I've taken
> Is Christ, who embraces the unwedded above all others,
> Even if he was fastened for all, and bore the cross for everyone's sake.
> Jubilant in him even during bouts of depression
> I rejoice, and he makes me buoyant even in grief,
> Like gold cleansed of dross in smelting furnaces.[124]

Virginity resumes a discussion of the married people's claim: since virgins come from marriage, they should respect marriage. Virginity says the most excellent children are better than their parents. For a prominent example, Virginity says: "And Christ is from Mary; nevertheless he is much better than she."[125] Yet, Virginity herself recognizes that, at times, the married outrun virgins in the race for holiness. She ends her long discourse with images of comparison.[126] Occasionally, one sees snowflakes in spring, flowers in winter, gray hairs on youth, and strength in the elderly. Things like this do not usually happen, but they do occur at times. Marriage is earthly, and to be unwedded is to be yoked to Christ, the absolute monarch. Still, every so often it is virginity that falls, and marriage that springs up toward heaven. Granted that there are exceptions in life's practice, Virginity bids all to heed Christ's exhortation to cast aside everything, so as to live in total chastity. Choosing Virginity's path (as Gregory himself did), all can be one in mind with the most pure beings of heaven and return to the unfettered life of paradise.

The poem concludes after unyoked Virginity speaks with the judges (perhaps the readers themselves), who desire Marriage, but crown Virginity's head: the image which began this poem. Yet, Gregory alters the apparent exclusivity of this awards ceremony. Intervening as the true *agōnothetēs*, Christ gives them both a gift of honor, setting Virginity at his right and Marriage at his left, "which thing, too, is a most high honor."[127] Gregory's pastoral ministry features Christ's own encouragement for the faithful to see the superiority of the virginal life, but to do so without degrading the married life. Therefore, his ministry to the married and unmarried finds inspiration in Matt. 19: 1–12, and emphasizes that the most important thing is to be united to Christ in the mind with a pure faith: a constant theme in his autobiographical Christology.

[124] *Carm.* 1.2.1.597–602 (PG 37.567–68); trans. Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 112–13 (alt.). For a similar expression of Gregory's joy in Christ in the midst of hardship, see *De rebus suis* 75–76.

[125] *Carm.* 1.2.1.693 (PG 37.575); trans. Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 117.

[126] *Carm.* 1.2.1.701–11.

[127] *Carm.* 1.2.1.732 (PG 37.573); trans. Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 118. For early Christian literature depicting Christ as the *agōnothetēs*, see Sundermann, *Gregor von Nazianz: Der Rangstreit zwischen Ehe und Jungfräulichkeit*, 236.

CHRIST IN GREGORY'S MINISTRY CONCERNING THE RICH AND THE POOR

Prior to his ministry to the poor, Gregory became poor through asceticism, imitating Christ's own kenosis: "for your sake he became poor although he was rich, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor. 8: 9).[128] Just as Gregory abstains from marriage for the sake of Christ, so he abstains from the riches of this world for Christ. Gregory's asceticism hardly drove him to destitution, as his will, drawn up at the end of 381 when Gregory had returned to Cappadocia, gives legal proof to considerable wealth—almost all of which was to go to the holy Catholic Church's care for the poor in Nazianzus.[129] Gregory's curial class enabled him to speak to the elites of society as their social equal, while Gregory's own voluntary asceticism identifies him with Christ and the poor, thus enabling him to motivate others to love the poor on Christ's terms.[130]

Gregory addresses the needs that arise from poverty in various works, but one stands out above all others: *Or*. 14, *On the Love of the Poor*.[131] Gregory's *Or*. 14 can quite profitably be compared with similar efforts of Basil, and especially Gregory of Nyssa, whose own preaching has several points of convergence. In making these comparisons, one should not miss a distinctive feature in our Gregory's preaching.[132] In her major study of the three Cappadocian

[128] For Gregory's descriptions of his asceticism with Basil, around 361, see *Ep*. 4–6. Gregory's description of Cledonius as one who lives for the poor, after having dedicated all to Christ, is an example of how Gregory understands another's asceticism in reference to Christ and the poor. See *Carm*. 2.2.1.121–23, analyzed in Neil McLynn, "The Tax Man and the Theologian: Gregory, Hellenius, and the Monks of Nazianzus," in *Re-reading Gregory of Nazianzus*, ed. Christopher A. Beeley, 178–95, at p. 183.

[129] For a defense of the date as the day before the kalends of January (i.e., December 31, 381) reported in the manuscripts, see Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 184–86.

[130] Bernard Coulie's study on wealth in Gregory's works demonstrates in considerable detail Gregory's complexity and universality in matters of wealth. For example, Gregory makes distinctions concerning possession, acquisition, and usage which would enable someone of his standing to practice an authentic asceticism. See Bernard Coulie, *Les Richesses dans l'oeuvre de Saint Grégoire de Nazianze: Étude littéraire et historique*, Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain 32 (Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1985).

[131] For a survey of Gregory's writings pertaining to charitable works, see Coulie, *Les Richesses dans l'oeuvre de Saint Grégoire de Nazianze*, 171–89. For a study of Gregory's consideration for the poor in *Or*. 16, *On his Father's Silence*, see Susan R. Holman, *The Hungry Are Dying: Beggars and Bishops in Roman Cappadocia*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 169–77.

[132] Scholars disagree about this oration's original date, setting, and context of the Cappadocian efforts to relieve the poor. For example, Brian Daley thinks that our Gregory's oration may have literary dependence on the second oration by Gregory of Nyssa on the same subject. See Daley, "Building the New City," 454–55. Also, Daley thinks it best to group the preaching on loving the poor by Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus as supporting Basil's campaign in Caesarea and from the period of 369–72. On the other hand, Susan Holman argues that Gregory of Nyssa probably depended on our Gregory's *Or*. 14, and both Gregories give little to no

Fathers on ministry to the poor, Susan Holman observes, "While all three men speak to, and perhaps in, a liturgical context, it is Nazianzen whose central identity within the church is seen here by his placement of the poor at the very center of all that the church means to him: the identity of Christ."[133] This Christocentric emphasis should be seen precisely in how Gregory cares for both those with wealth and those without wealth. In fact, since the aim of the oration is for people to love the poor by coming to their aid, the primary audience is those who have money. To say that the oration serves only the poor would hardly do justice to Gregory's argument which is meant for the ears (and souls) of those who need to experience Christ in their lives.

In this book's Chapter 1, we considered the oration's opening plea as an example of Gregory's theology of the Word in his orations. Immediately after this introductory appeal, Gregory highlights a number of virtues, giving their biblical models, before he decides on which one is supreme. Because Gregory knows Christ to be the crown of goodness, giving life to the circle of virtues,[134] it is not surprising that he gives Christ's own example for many of them: love of one's brothers and sisters; love of humanity; patience; gentleness; zeal; strict discipline of the body; prayer and vigilance; chastity and virginity; solitude and silence; humility; poverty and contempt for money.[135] What may be more surprising is that he does not name Christ for every virtue, as for example, self-control, whose only example Gregory gives is David.[136] Gregory summarizes all virtues in contemplation and action. Contemplation raises our mind to what is similar to the mind; action "receives Christ as its guest and looks after him, revealing the spell of love by its works."[137] Interpreting many dwelling places with God as many possible ways to attain heaven, Gregory follows not

evidence of a conversation with Basil concerning poverty. See Holman, *The Hungry Are Dying*, 144–48. From a different perspective on this question, Milovanović argues that *Or*. 14 is a deliberative speech with ambiguity of time and audience suggesting a semi-fictitious showpiece for future imitation. See Milovanović, "Sailing to Sophistopolis."

[133] Holman, *The Hungry Are Dying*, 143. Holman continues that Basil tends to place the poor in the hearth, marketplace, and public roads. While Gregory of Nyssa has some attention to the Incarnation, he "builds his argument in terms more of philosophic cosmos than on ecclesiastical location and behavior" (p. 143). Matz provides the evidence of Gregory's extraordinary attention to the Bible when preaching on the poor. For a consideration of the 154 scriptural citations in *Or*. 14, see Brian J. Matz, "Deciphering a Recipe for Biblical Preaching in *Oration* 14," in *Re-reading Gregory of Nazianzus*, ed. Christopher A. Beeley, 49–66.

[134] Cf. *Or*. 45.13. See Harrison, *Festal Orations*, 173 n. 58.

[135] *Or*. 14.2–4.

[136] The example of David refusing to drink from the water near Bethlehem's gate when brought to him, a story recounted after David's last words in 2 Sam. 23, could be compared with Christ's refusal to drink the wine drugged with myrrh in Mark 15: 23.

[137] *Or*. 14.4 (PG 35.864A); trans. Daley, 78. Winslow paraphrases Gregory to show the mutual interdependence of theory and praxis: "'Contemplation' receives Christ as He comes to us; 'activity' strives towards Christ as the goal of life. The Christian cannot do without either." See Donald F. Winslow, "Gregory of Nazianzus and Love for the Poor," *Anglican Theological Review*

only Paul, but also Christ himself, in exalting love above all others.[138] And out of the different kinds of love, Gregory says, "I must conclude that love of the poor, and compassion and sympathy for our own flesh and blood, is its most excellent form."[139]

Gregory's appeal is aimed to move his people to compassion for the sick poor, particularly for those who suffer from leprosy.[140] He describes how no one will even approach them.[141] They appear repulsive, and so think of themselves as hated. Gregory sets himself up as the model of appropriate emotion. Just thinking of their plight brings him to tears, and all who love Christ and the poor should also cry out for the gift of God's mercy upon those whose flesh has rotted away. Christ died for them just as he died for us, says Gregory, with echoes of Paul and baptismal practice.[142] Gregory reminds the people of the responsibility that goes in their being named after Christ, the one who humbled himself and became poor—suffering pain and weakness for us, so that we might be rich in divinity (cf. 2 Cor. 8: 9).[143] Gregory asks if he and his people will be like the others who ignore the poor, who walk past them, leaving them for dead. Such is not the way of Christ the Good Shepherd, who brings back the one gone astray, seeks out the lost, and strengthens the infirm. It is not even the way of human nature, which has compassion as a law.

Gregory gives his people two options in caring for the poor. They may give up all things for Christ's sake, so that they might follow Christ truly—gaining Christ at the expense of all else. In this way, people can become exalted through humility and be made rich through poverty. The other option is to share goods with Christ. In that way, the possession of goods may be hallowed by sharing them with the needy.[144]

Gregory emphasizes the transience of this world and the permanence of the blessed life above with Christological force. He says that the creative Word, the Wisdom surpassing every mind, has arranged the things of this world to be unstable, so as to stir us to consider what lies ahead. Made in the image of God, we long for that higher world where there is no instability.[145] Becoming wise, the blessed person can distinguish between the two worlds, that which is ephemeral and unreal, and that which is lasting and true, wielding the

47 (1965): 348–59, at p. 351. Špidlík writes, "Praxis is life in Christ and according to his example." See Špidlík, "La Theoria et la praxis chez Grégoire de Nazianze," 363.

[138] *Or.* 14.5; cf. John 14: 2; 1 Cor. 13: 13; Matt. 22: 34–40.

[139] *Or.* 14.5 (PG 35.864B); trans. Daley, 78.

[140] For a comparison of our Gregory with Gregory of Nyssa on leprosy in their new approaches to the "sacred disease" against the background of ancient medical and philosophical perceptions, see Susan R. Holman, "Healing the Social Leper in Gregory of Nyssa's and Gregory of Nazianzus's '*περὶ φιλοπτωχίας*'," *Harvard Theological Review* 92 (1999): 283–309, and her *The Hungry Are Dying*, 153–67.

[141] *Or.* 14.9–14. [142] *Or.* 14.14; cf. Rom. 6: 4 and 8: 17; Col. 2: 12.

[143] *Or.* 14.15. [144] *Or.* 14.18. [145] *Or.* 14.20.

Word's sword to separate the better from the worse. "[C]rucified to the world with Christ, he rises from the dead with Christ and ascends with Christ to inherit the life that never fades or deceives," says Gregory.[146] Interpreting Christ's command in the Johannine Farewell Discourse, "Arise, let us go from here," Gregory asserts that this is not a matter of mere earthly movement.[147] (In fact, John's Gospel does not indicate a physical change after that verse. Rather, Christ is here talking about the Vine and the branches.) According to Gregory, Christ wants his disciples to be drawn away from earthly things to heaven's blessings. In this way, Gregory urges his audience in first-person plural exhortations to follow the Word.[148]

Among the motivations he articulates, Gregory includes the promise of the most exalted dignity, as well as the offer simply to be rid of sin. For example, Gregory bids each person to hope for the kingdom of heaven, for the opportunity "to become a child of God, a fellow heir with Christ, even (I make bold to say) to become yourself divine (*καὶ θεὸν αὐτόν*)."[149] Besides mirroring the condition of the leprous in his oration, Gregory also reflects how his listeners themselves are stained by sin, and so in need of purification by giving to the poor. All, even those not seeing leprosy in their soul, must reverence the one who was wounded and weakened for our sake, by being kind to one of Christ's members. In an ambiguous expression, Gregory bids his listener to find salvation in Christ through caring for the poor: "[G]o up to the healer, speak to him imploringly, heal wounds by wounds, regain likeness by likeness—or rather, be healed of major things by minor things!"[150]

Gregory touches upon Matt. 25: 31–46 by evoking his own witness of conversion.[151] He asks his people if they think kindness is merely a matter of choice, and not a necessity for salvation. He admits that he used to think like that, but Christ's left hand of judgment instilled fear in him. Simply by not caring for Christ through the needy, people will hear the rebukes reserved for those reckoned as goats. From this stern warning, and through the example of his own change of heart, Gregory then identifies himself with his hearers in an

[146] *Or.* 14.21 (PG 35.884D); trans. Daley, 87.

[147] *Or.* 14.21; cf. John 14: 31.

[148] *Or.* 14.22.

[149] *Or.* 14.23 (PG 35.888A); trans. Daley, 88. Other translations of *καὶ θεὸν αὐτόν* are possible: "even a god yourself;" "even God himself" (cf. Winslow, "Gregory of Nazianzus and Love for the Poor," 358); and "even very God" (cf. Vinson, 56).

[150] *Or.* 14.37 (PG 35.908B); trans. Daley, 96. Daley comments that Gregory's meaning seems to be: "heal your wounds by tending the wounds of the poor (or: by Christ's wounds), regain your likeness to him by acting like him (or: by his having becoming like you), and most of all, heal your own greater defects by what are inevitably lesser acts of goodness." See Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 217 n. 173.

[151] Cf. Gregory's prayer to Christ in *Carm.* 1.1.27.67–70.

urgent first-person plural appeal to care for Christ. The oration's final paragraph deserves to be read in full for its rich Christocentric symbolism:

> If you believe me at all, then, servants and brothers and sisters and fellow heirs of Christ, let us take care of Christ while there is still time; let us minister to Christ's needs, let us give Christ nourishment, let us clothe Christ, let us gather Christ in, let us show Christ honor—not just at our tables, as some do, nor just with ointment, like Mary, nor just with a tomb, like Joseph of Arimathea, nor just with the things needed for burial, like that half-hearted lover of Christ, Nicodemus, nor just with gold and frankincense and myrrh, like the Magi who came to him before all the rest. But since the Lord of all things "desires mercy and not sacrifice," and since "a compassionate heart is worth more than tens of thousands of fat rams," let us give this gift to him through the needy, who today are cast down on the ground, so that when we all are released from this place, they may receive us into the eternal tabernacle, in Christ himself, who is our Lord, to whom be glory for all the ages. Amen.[152]

Gregory thus concludes this masterly oration in a final urgent plea to act as a matter of one's salvation or perdition. Its dense symbolism features Christ: as the one who makes us his co-heirs in fraternal bonds; as the one who received acts of kindness in the Gospel and is still in need in the poor; as the Lord of all who speaks in Old Testament passages; as the everlasting tent for our heavenly rest; and as the Lord deserving all praise. By this striking combination of images, Gregory, as Christ's herald, persuades others to serve in the Church's Christomorphic ministry to the poor.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, Gregory's mind does not segregate into neat compartments his life, his doctrine, and his ministry.[153] His ministry is not something extrinsic to his autobiographical Christology, but expresses it for the salvation of others. Because Gregory believes Christ, God blended with humanity, saves him, Gregory is willing to devote his own life and teaching to others in Christlike fashion. He does this as an example so that others may speak and act as Christ himself speaks and acts.

[152] *Or*. 14.40 (PG 35.909B–C); trans. Daley, 97; cf. Hos. 6: 6/Matt. 9: 13 and Dan. 3: 40. Beeley quotes a phrase from this final paragraph when he says: "At the strongest rhetorical moment of *Oration* 14, Gregory appeals to the prospect of Christ's impending final judgment. He pointedly reminds his hearers that whether or not they care for the suffering Christ now, 'while there is still time,' will decide whether they will continue with Christ in the life to come or suffer the condemnation of divine judgment." See Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 257.

[153] Cf. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*, 235.

This chapter has reviewed Gregory's Christomorphic ministry through a number of perspectives. The first was a textual study of *Or.* 2, commonly considered the first Christian treatise on the priesthood. Yet, the work is no abstract treatment of principles, but Gregory's personal plea in an apology for fleeing Nazianzus after his ordination to the priesthood. In this oration, Gregory shows how priestly ministry extends the very purpose of Christ's life and work.

The chapter also examined how Gregory sees Christ in the models and anti-models of ministry. Gregory loves to produce literary images for people to see, and he wants his people to be transformed by images of Christ and to flee from images of those who are exposed to be counterfeits of Christ.[154] To be effective in ministry is to be conformed to Christ. Without that conformity to Christ, a minister becomes a sort of anti-Christ figure. Whereas Gregory devotes considerable attention to such models as Basil, Athanasius, and himself, he also gives abundant evidence to the corruption of the clergy of his time, as so many false ministers attack Christ and his people.

In the ministerial themes of marriage/virginity and wealth/poverty, we find Gregory at work showing the significance of Christ for a diversity of Christian lives. Gregory is attentive to the needs of his people to embrace Christ in their own lives, especially by practicing the virtues. In doing so, Gregory is careful to show how some lives, such as those of virgins and those who have divested themselves of worldly wealth for the sake of Christ, have greater resemblance to the life of Christ, and yet all Christian lives are called to communicate the teaching of Christ. By doing so, Gregory affirms a unity of the Body of Christ, which is the Church, and a diversity of gifts and functions. Gregory thus sets himself as a pastor for all, just as Christ himself shephereds all God's people.

Throughout these considerations, we find Gregory's fervent, personal devotion to Christ as foundational for his service to the Church. As herald of the Word, Gregory sought "to win the hearts and minds of men and women and to change their lives."[155] He desired to make people nothing less than images of God incarnate, with whom Gregory felt his own life was blended. His great effort in ministry was to form a legacy which would guide Christians long after his death.

[154] For a poem that extols veracity against false priests, while explicitly using a comparison from painting, see *Carm.* 2.1.17.

[155] Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought*, xiv.

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Epilogue

In the "retirement" following his Constantinople ministry, Gregory fashioned his written words in service to Christians in the future.[1] Among the Fathers of the Church, he was certainly one of those most conscious of bequeathing a theological legacy—just as his is the only extant will of a Father.[2] Gregory did, indeed, have a tremendous influence on the Church after his death, such as in Christology. But the subsequent doctrinal controversies were not largely interested in *Gregory's* Christ, so much as in answers that could be culled from Gregory's works about person, nature, and will in Christological doctrine.[3] Opponents in the Christological controversies selected certain texts and key passages from Gregory that give theological support for their respective doctrinal positions. As we saw in this book's Introduction, theologians as diverse as Cyril and Nestorius, Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians, Maximus the Confessor and the Monothelites all claimed Gregory's authority for their own doctrinal ends.

Gregory's harmononius blend of Christ and himself thus became muted in the midst of technical precisions, but it has never been fully silenced.

[1] McGuckin narrates Gregory's retreat from the Council of Constantinople (381) back to Cappadocia in this fashion: "As he made his way into a self-imposed exile, it became more and more clear to him that he had to spend a lot of time polishing his literary works so that they could enjoy the largest and most 'exemplary' circulation possible. He would transform them into a veritable compendium of writings and sermons needed in any future bishop's cabinet. It might take him the rest of his life, but this is basically the task he set himself" (McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus*, 368–69).

[2] See the translation, with introduction and notes, in Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 184–89 and 254–58. Also, see Daley, "Who is the Real Bishop of Constantinople? A Reconsideration of Gregory of Nazianzus's Will," *Studia Patristica* 47 (2010): 147–52. Cf. Raymond van Dam, "Self-Representation in the Will of Gregory of Nazianzus," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 46 (1995): 118–48. On p. 127, van Dam comments on Champlin's characterization of Gregory's will as "the earliest complete Roman law will." Such says more about the fragmentary nature of historical evidence than about the incidence of wills in antiquity.

[3] For a significant example of this, consider Maximus the Confessor's appropriation of Gregory (where Gregory's rhetoric is clarified in philosophical precision). Cf. Andrew Louth, "St Gregory the Theologian and St Maximus the Confessor: The Shaping of Tradition," in *The Making and Remaking of Christian Doctrine: Essays in Honour of Maurice Wiles*, eds. Sarah Coakley and David A. Pailin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 117–30.

Byzantine traditions attest to Gregory's life being wholly taken up into the life of Christ. For example, the eighth-century Cosmas of Jerusalem offers motivation to study the Theologian from Christ's perspective: "Imitate my Gregory, Christ says. He was not the speaker. I was."[4] The one whom Gregory calls "my Christ" in his writings is now said in Gregory's *Nachleben* to extol "my Gregory." Likewise, a beautiful image dating to the middle of the twelfth century from Codex Sinaiticus Graecus 339, fol. 4^{v} captures the particular relationship that Gregory enjoyed with Jesus Christ, according to this Byzantine tradition.[5] Christ, with a scroll in his left hand and his right hand outstretched, comes from an opening in heaven to bless Gregory, who is seated and writing.

What might a recovery of Gregory's intensely personal connection with Jesus achieve for theological scholarship today? First, this reconfiguration of Gregory's Christology allows us to be more attentive to the distinctive contours of Gregory's rhetorical expression of doctrinal matters. A master rhetorician, Gregory used his literary skills for a doctrinal mission. Without sensitivity to this rhetoric prowess, we would be tone deaf to Gregory's lyrical production. Second, it does not pass over aspects of Gregory's writing that seem too ambiguous or too narcissistic for our tastes. Gregory was not writing a book for a twenty-first-century university press. We must enter into his world, with its own theological concerns and literary conventions, in order to give him a sympathetic reading. Third, it contributes to the re-analysis of early Christian literature along lines different from the agendas set in the patrologies of the nineteeth and twentieth centuries. Gregory of Nazianzus simply resists fitting neatly in categories imposed on him by modern taxonomy. Fourth, it may assist theologians in re-claiming Gregory as an outstanding contributor to the Christian spiritual vision. The Theologian is the most autobiographical of the Greek Fathers because Gregory wants to write continuously about God at work in his life.

For those who have accepted his theological authority, Gregory's life and teaching represent, in some way, the life and teaching of Christ himself. Such a correspondence through deification was exactly what Gregory evoked. A recovery of Gregory's blending of his life with the life of Christ can help us understand not only this fascinating fourth-century theologian, but also something of the closeness of God to human life. Gregory's distinctive teaching on how near God's Word is can be heard with ever greater clarity when we pay attention to the persuasive force he uses to proclaim, "*My* Jesus."

[4] Cosmas of Jerusalem, *Commentarii in Gregorii Nazianzeni*, PG 38.343; cf. Van Dam, *Kingdom of Snow*, 201 and 248 n. 21.

[5] This image graces the covers of Brian Daley's *Gregory of Nazianzus* and Christopher Beeley's *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God*. Cf. Codex Athos, Pantocrator 31, fol. 4^{v}, where Christ leans over Gregory's shoulder and whispers to him. The manuscript portraitures indicate that "Christ himself inspired Gregory of Nazianzus," according to Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Liturgical Homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus*, 23.

Bibliography

This bibliography is divided into four sections. The first section, Editions of Gregory of Nazianzus, lists printed editions of his works alphabetized by editor. I have also used the helpful electronic resource of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG). When a discrepancy exists between the TLG and the best printed editions indicated below, I almost always opted for the printed edition. To my surprise, a few times the TLG's electronic edition of the PG was more reliable than the available printed edition of the PG (where a more recent edition than the PG does not exist). I duly noted these times in the footnotes. Also, I have indicated where I thought the printed PG reading to be superior to what seems to be mistaken in the normally superior printed SC edition. The second section, Translations of Gregory of Nazianzus, is alphabetized by translator and lists all translations used or consulted. The third section, Other Classical Texts and Translations, is alphabetized by the original author and lists select sources, other than those of Gregory of Nazianzus, of particular significance for this study. The fourth section, Secondary Literature, lists the cited modern sources in this study. Where one work is applicable multiple times, a full citation is provided only once and may be given in abbreviated form elsewhere.

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Works of Gregory of Nazianzus Index

Letters *(Ep.)*
1 119n150
4 20
4-6 220n128
5 20
8.1 7n27
11 29–30
11.4 29n80
24 60n22
29 77–78, 77n116
37 18–19n27
38 60n22
39 18–19n27
42 180n141
44 180n141
45 180n141
51 19, 19n28, 23
52 19
52.2 19n32
52.3 19n34
54 19
64 19n34, 180n141
65 180n141
66 18–19n27, 180n141
77 177–8
77.4 29n79
77.12 178n127
80 18–19n27
88 14n14
101 3, 3n8, 7, 10, 18–19n27, 23, 24, 46n148, 106, 114n118, 115n127, 116, 119n150, 121, 123–51, 123n1, 126n11, 128–9n24, 147–8n118, 149n126, 149n127
101.3(6) 130n28
101.4(12) 130n29
101.4(14-15) 130n32
101.5(16) 131n34, 132n38, 133n46
101.5(17) 134n52
101.5(18–21) 95, 136n57
101.5(19) 3n8
101.5(21) 94n8, 95
101.5(22) 113n114, 139n76, 141n85
101.5(23–24) 142n93
101.5(25–29) 143n99
101.5(30-31) 144n104
101.5(31) 119n150
101.5(32) 7n29, 200n24
101.5 (32) 200n24
101.5(32-35) 146n112
101.6(36) 147n117
101.6(38) 148n119
101.7(45) 148n120
101.8(49) 148n121
101.9(50) 135
101.11(56) 149n122
101.13(63-65) 135
101.14(68) 47n154
101.16(73) 23n50
102 3, 3n8, 7, 123n1, 124, 126n11, 128–9n24, 130, 143, 149n126
102.1 125n7
102.3(7) 127n13, 143n102
102.3(9) 149n123
102.4(11) 149n123
102.5(14-15) 133n45, 149n127
102.8(28) 139n75
107-14 197
116-19 197
119 198n15
125 124n5
125.4 20n35
130.1-2 210n74
131 210n75
137 105n66
157 18–19n27
168 18–19n27
171 186n171, 205, 205n46
173 24n63
178 179n138
178.11 29n75
202 7, 123, 123n1, 126n11, 128–9n24f, 129, 130, 141–2, 142, 149n126
202.1-3 124n3
202.7 124n4
202.15-16 142n92
232 215n104
Orations *(Or.)*
1 10, 153–4, 153n1, 153n2, 154n5, 155, 157n19, 160, 208
1.1 153n1, 190n191
1.2 153n2, 154n8
1.4 154n9
1.5 155n11, 160n37, 179n138
1.7 52n178
2 10, 24n55, 50n170, 62, 77n111, 153, 153n1, 199–204, 199n19, 208, 225
2.9-34 214

Orations *(Or.)* (*cont.*)
2.16 62n30
2.22 145, 200n22
2.23 116, 116n129, 204n44
2.23-25 200n23
2.24 64n37, 200n24
2.25 201n25
2.26 201n26
2.35 201n29
2.38 201n30
2.51-56 65, 203n40
2.54 106n70
2.55 65n46, 202n32
2.56 66n47, 202n33
2.73 201n27
2.75 107n75
2.77 172n98
2.78 62n30
2.91 201n27
2.94-99 202n34
2.95 202n36
2.95-99 203
2.96 36n112
2.97 36n112
2.98 203n37
2.99 203n39
2.106-109 203n40
2.110 204n41
2.115 204n42
2.116 204n43
2.117 52n178, 204n45
3 208, 208n67
3.1 85n157
3.6 5n21, 208n68
3.7 169n82
3.8 52n178
3.18 64n37
3.26 95n14
4 13n10, 16n21, 30, 33, 53
4.4 53n180
4.12 34n98
4.20 16n19
4.73 28n72
4.78 181n144
4.100 12n3
4.102 34n99
4.106 34n100
4.113 34n101, 34n102
5 16n21, 33
5.39 33n93
5.42 16n19
6 153n3
6.2 106n70
6.4-5 11
6.5 12n3, 14n13
6.15 106n69
6.22 52n178
7 109–10
7.16 16n18
7.21 109n92
7.23 109n94, 110n95, 110n96, 119n148, 179n138
7.24 52n178
8 66–67
8.6 43n132, 43n133
8.9 43n134, 43n135
8.12 43n136
8.13 43n137
8.15-18 43n139
8.16 44n140
8.18 43n138
8.22 44n143, 45n144
8.23 52n178
9.6 52n178
10 112
10.2 56n3, 112n111
10.4 52n178
11 14n14
11.5 85n157
11.7 52n178
12 209
12.1 209n70
12.4 209n72
12.6 52n178
13.4 52n178
14 16n21, 17, 108, 214n101, 220, 220–1n132
14.1 17n23
14.4 221–2n137
14.5 222n138
14.6 108n79
14.7 108n80, 108n81
14.8 108n81
14.9-14 222n141
14.14 222n142
14.15 110n97, 222n143
14.18 222n144
14.20 222n145
14.21 223n146, 223n147
14.22 223n148
14.23 179n138, 223n149
14.37 223n150
14.40 52n178, 224n152
15.12 52n178
16 220n131
16.2 19n30
16.20 52n178
17.4 145, 145n107
17.13 52n178
18 16, 16n18, 145
18.7 5n21
18.18 153n3

18.28 44n141
18.42 145n108
19 13n8, 160, 214n101
19.10 29
19.12 160n34
20 30, 31
20.4 32n87, 167
20.5 32n88
20.12 52n178
21.1 205n48
21.2 85n157
21.6 80n130
21.10 205n49
21.29 206n50, 206n51
21.31 206n52
21.33 206n53
21.34 206n53
21.37 52n178
22 127
22.4 145n109
22.13 127n17, 127n18, 128n19, 128n20
22.16 52n178
23.5 179n136
23.6 100n36
23.14 52n178
24 131n34
24.4 181n145
24.19 52n178
25 29n76
25.8 125n7
25.19 52n178
26 29n76
26.6 29n77
26.9 57n8
26.12 29n77
27 30, 32, 47n154
27.1 19n30, 27n66, 32n90
27.4 32n91
27.7 33n92
27.9 52n178
27-31 26, 27, 31, 46–50
28 32, 47n154, 48
28.1 32n89, 47n154, 140n78
28.3 46–47n153
28.13 12n4
28.22 108n81
28.28 30n82
28.31 30n82
29 6, 47, 52, 54, 132–3, 177
29.1 48n158
29.4 132, 132n40
29.8 187n178
29.10 117n135
29.15 49, 50n171
29.16-7 54n183
29.17-21 48
29.18 48n159, 48n160, 118n137
29.19 62n31, 85n155, 94n8, 97n22, 97n25, 112n110, 113n113, 116, 116n130, 174n111
29.19-20 93
29.20 48–49, 49n165, 177n122, 179n136
29.21 52n178, 52n179
29-30 46–50
30 3, 6, 47, 49, 54, 91, 113–14
30.1 48n161
30.2 48n162
30.3 113n115, 118n144
30.5 91n1, 92n2, 95, 127n14
30.6 92n3, 92n4, 113n116
30.7 49n168
30.8 3n9, 114n118
30.12 3n15
30.16 49n167
30.17-19 50n171
30.20 50n172
30.21 50n173, 52n175, 85n157
31 47n154, 140, 177, 192
31.1 177n123, 179n136
31.3 166n66
31.4 140n78
31.10 125n7
31.14 96–96n18
31.23 117n136
31.26 83n142
31.26-27 192n199
31.28 80n130
31.29 192n197
31.32 117n135
32 214n101
32.5 119n151
32.15 65n45
32.33 52n178
33 180, 208n67
33.1 179n136
33.5 180n141
33.10 5n21
33.13 180n141
33.15 179n138
33.17 52n178
34.1-2 17n24
34.7 17n24
34.10 112, 112n108
35 14n14
36.11 179n138
36.12 52n178
37 18, 36, 37, 39–42, 177, 214n101, 215
37.2 18n26, 41n128
37.3 41
37.4 11n1, 41n129, 45n146, 177n124, 177n125
37.5 41n129

Orations *(Or.)* (*cont.*)
37.7 215n103
37.10 215n106
37.12 216n107
37.17 6n26, 177n126, 216n108
37.18 216n109
37.22 42n130
37.23 42n131
37.24 52n178
38 3n14, 17, 78n116, 107, 115, 157n19, 158n24, 161, 162, 163–6, 164n53, 164n56, 167n69, 168, 175, 176, 182n150, 184, 191
38.1 161n42
38.2 163n49, 208n65
38.3 163n50
38.4 164n52, 164n54
38.5-6 164n55
38.6 18n25
38.7-13 164n55, 184n161
38.8 47n154
38.10 107n73, 184n163
38.11 107n74, 107n76
38.12 108n77
38.13 96, 106n70, 108n78, 115n123, 115n124, 115n125
38.13-15 (45.9,26-27) 94n8
38.14 (45.36) 172n98
38.14-15 189
38.15 164n57, 167n74
38.16 164n58, 165n59, 165n60, 181n146, 191–2n195
38.17 165n61, 165n62
38.18 52n178, 160n35, 165n63, 166n64, 177n121
38-40 6, 10, 96n16, 155, 155n11, 157–8, 161, 175
38-41 157, 158
39 30, 157n19, 164, 166–9
39.1 45n146, 166n65, 166n66
39.2 30n83, 166n67, 166n68
39.3-7 164n55
39.9 167
39.10 167n71
39.11 30n84, 167n69, 167n72
39.12 167n74
39.12-13 94n8
39.13 111, 112n106, 112n107, 167n75
39.14 167n69, 168n77, 168n78
39.15 140n78, 168n79
39.17 94n8, 168n80
39.19 169n82
39.20 52n178, 169n83
40 155, 161, 169–75
40.2 161n38, 170n85
40.3 170n85
40.4 170n85
40.5 170n87
40.6 94n8, 170n89, 170n91
40.8 170n85
40.9 170n92, 171n93
40.10 171n95
40.17 171n97
40.18 172n98
40.25 172n99, 172n101
40.26 170n85
40.27 172n102
40.28 170n85
40.29 159n29, 159n30
40.30 159n31, 159n32
40.33 94n8, 172n103
40.34 172n104
40.34-35 171n95
40.36 169n82
40.38 170n85, 173n105, 173n106, 173n107
40.42 170n85
40.44 170n85, 173, 174n108
40.45 94n8, 174, 174n109, 174n111
40.46 52n178, 175n114
41 10, 53, 155, 157n19, 176, 191–2
41.1 53n181
41.5 176n120, 192n198
41.11 192n200, 192n202
41.12 192n201, 192n203, 193n204
41.14 193n205, 193n206, 193n207
41.18 52n178
42 58n11, 73, 73n90, 178, 180–1
42.3 34n99
42.9 183n155
42.13 178n128
42.17 8n30
42.21 66n51, 211n79
42.22 211n80
42.24 41n126
42.27 52n178, 181n142
43 58n11, 119n149, 206n54, 206–7n55, 208n65
43.7 44n141
43.20 119n149
43.24 119n149
43.35 207n57, 207n58
43.36 207n60, 207n61
43.38 94n8, 143n98
43.52 207n62
43.56 208n64
43.57 208n65
43.61 94n8, 207n56
43.63 28n73, 207n59
43.64 94n8, 181n146
43.70-76 207n60
43.82 52n178
44 155, 157n19, 190–1

44.4 94n8, 191n194
44.12 52n178
44-45 157, 158
45 10, 78n116, 155, 157n19, 182–90, 182n150, 184n163
45.1 183n152, 183n157
45.2 54n184, 94n8, 182n148, 184n159, 184n162
45.2-4 221n135
45.3-9 184n161
45.4 221–2n137
45.7 107n74
45.9 115n25
45.10 184n163, 185n165
45.12 185n166
45.13 54n182, 94n8, 185n167, 185n168, 185n169, 186n170, 221n134
45.19 186n171
45.21 186n172
45.22 94n8, 186n173, 187n177, 187n178, 188n181, 188n182
45.23 188n183, 189n186
45.25 189n188
45.26-27 189
45.28 189n189
45.28-29 94n8
45.29 190n190
45.30 52n178, 184n159, 190n192

Poems *(Carm.)*
1.1 (Dogmatic poems) 68, 68n62
1.1.2 115n125
1.1.2.15-16 106n67
1.1.2.51-56 24n57
1.1.4 106n68
1.1.4.11f 108n82
1.1.4.36 118n142
1.1.4.91f 108n82
1.1.5.27f 108n82
1.1.7 108, 108n83
1.1.7.1-2 108n82
1.1.7.71 108n83
1.1.7.79 108n84
1.1.8 25n58
1.1.9 38n115, 38n116
1.1.9.26 39n121
1.1.9.39-43 38n117
1.1.9.43 39n121
1.1.9.53-69 39n119
1.1.9.69 39n121
1.1.9.78-81 39n121
1.1.9.80 39n121
1.1.9.93-95 39n121
1.1.10 116–17
1.1.10.37-44 118n141
1.1.10.56-61 117n131
1.1.10.63-64 117n132
1.1.11.7-12 113n112
1.1.12 35n105, 183n155
1.1.12.1-2 35n105
1.1.12-28 35n105
1.1.27.29-30 41n127
1.1.27.43-66 175n113
1.1.27.67-70 223n151
1.1.28 72n80
1.1.35.13-16 36n107
1.2 (Moral poems) 68n62, 213, 216n110
1.2.1 40n122, 216–19
1.2.1.20 217n113
1.2.1.92-97 108n83
1.2.1.105 217n115
1.2.1.107-111 217n116
1.2.1.149 111n101
1.2.1.152-54 111n102
1.2.1.156-57 111n103
1.2.1.248-87 218n118
1.2.1.288-95 218n119
1.2.1.311-12 218n120
1.2.1.329 218n121
1.2.1.339-41 218n122
1.2.1.409-11 109n86
1.2.1.583-85 218n123
1.2.1.597-602 219n124
1.2.1.693 219n125
1.2.1.701-11 219n126
1.2.1.732 219n127
1.2.2 216n110
1.2.8 40n122
1.2.12.5-7 118n143
1.2.13.162 109n88
1.2.14.66-67 111n99
1.2.14.81-82 111n99
1.2.14.90-92 111n100
1.2.15 108, 110n98
1.2.15.147-52 108n85
1.2.16 110n95, 213
1.2.16.29-34 213n98
1.2.17 40n122, 214, 214n99
1.2.17.31-32 214n100
1.2.17.65-66 214n102
1.2.63 111n104
2.1 (Poems on himself) 4, 68n62, 89
2.1.1 *(De rebus suis)* 9
2.1.1 *(De rebus suis)* 67n55, 68, 77–89
2.1.1.1-2 *(De rebus suis)* 83n144
2.1.1.13-18 *(De rebus suis)* 84n150
2.1.1.18-22 *(De rebus suis)* 83n148
2.1.1.27-36 *(De rebus suis)* 85n154
2.1.1.37 *(De rebus suis)* 80n127
2.1.1.38-43 *(De rebus suis)* 85n156
2.1.1.46-47 *(De rebus suis)* 85n157
2.1.1.48 *(De rebus suis)* 85n158

Poems *(Carm.)* (*cont.*)
2.1.1.75-76 *(De rebus suis)* 86n162
2.1.1.100-01 *(De rebus suis)* 85n160
2.1.1.104-5 *(De rebus suis)* 81n136
2.1.1.120-22 *(De rebus suis)* 85n158
2.1.1.239-46 *(De rebus suis)* 81n136
2.1.1.285-88 *(De rebus suis)* 85n160
2.1.1.351 *(De rebus suis)* 82n137
2.1.1.382 *(De rebus suis)* 86n166
2.1.1.465-66 *(De rebus suis)* 86n161
2.1.1.493-95 *(De rebus suis)* 85n159
2.1.1.509-10 *(De rebus suis)* 82n138
2.1.1.545-46 *(De rebus suis)* 88n172
2.1.1.547 *(De rebus suis)* 87n168
2.1.1.562 *(De rebus suis)* 87n169
2.1.1.564-68 *(De rebus suis)* 82n139
2.1.1.571-72 *(De rebus suis)* 88n170
2.1.1.573-75 *(De rebus suis)* 88n171
2.1.1.577-81 *(De rebus suis)* 88n172
2.1.1.582 *(De rebus suis)* 88n173
2.1.1.594-95 *(De rebus suis)* 88n174
2.1.1.596-99 *(De rebus suis)* 82n140
2.1.1.618-19 *(De rebus suis)* 81n135
2.1.1.624 *(De rebus suis)* 88n175
2.1.1.625-29 *(De rebus suis)* 89n176
2.1.1.628 *(De rebus suis)* 93n6
2.1.1.630-31 *(De rebus suis)* 89n177
2.1.1.633 *(De rebus suis)* 89n178
2.1.1.634 *(De rebus suis)* 89n179
2.1.2.1-4 69n65
2.1.2.3 79, 93n6
2.1.5.2 73n87
2.1.5.3-5 72n86
2.1.10.35-36 72n83
2.1.11 *(De vita sua)* 66, 68, 70, 71, 81
2.1.11 *(De vita sua)* 118
2.1.11 *(De vita sua)* 119, 126–7, 126n11, 178, 211
2.1.11.1-5 *(De vita sua)* 64n41
2.1.11.6-11 *(De vita sua)* 22n46
2.1.11.55-56 *(De vita sua)* 71n72
2.1.11.64 *(De vita sua)* 71n73
2.1.11.90 *(De vita sua)* 71n76
2.1.11.175-76 *(De vita sua)* 71n78
2.1.11.183 *(De vita sua)* 72n79
2.1.11.200-1 *(De vita sua)* 72n80
2.1.11.231 *(De vita sua)* 119n149
2.1.11.463-85 *(De vita sua)* 86n167
2.1.11.472 *(De vita sua)* 26n63
2.1.11.481 *(De vita sua)* 24n53
2.1.11.609-630 *(De vita sua)* 70
2.1.11.622-30 *(De vita sua)* 70n68
2.1.11.640-41 *(De vita sua)* 118n138
2.1.11.642-44 *(De vita sua)* 118n139
2.1.11.642-45 *(De vita sua)* 113n114
2.1.11.646-51 *(De vita sua)* 70n69
2.1.11.647-49 *(De vita sua)* 118n140
2.1.11.665-67 *(De vita sua)* 178n129
2.1.11.665-67 *(De vita sua)* 179n136
2.1.11.671-78 *(De vita sua)* 83n149
2.1.11.673-74 *(De vita sua)* 178n130
2.1.11.673-78 *(De vita sua)* 66n50
2.1.11.679-83 *(De vita sua)* 66n51
2.1.11.719 *(De vita sua)* 109n89
2.1.11.766 *(De vita sua)* 109n90
2.1.11.1146-85 *(De vita sua)* 126n9
2.1.11.1184-85 *(De vita sua)* 126n10
2.1.11.1441-74 *(De vita sua)* 176n117
2.1.11.1525-40 *(De vita sua)* 211n82
2.1.11.1527 *(De vita sua)* 211n83
2.1.11.1536-38 *(De vita sua)* 119n146
2.1.11.1545 *(De vita sua)* 211n84
2.1.11.1599-1603 *(De vita sua)* 211n85
2.1.11.1690-93 *(De vita sua)* 212n86
2.1.11.1694-1702 *(De vita sua)* 212n87
2.1.11.1756-58 *(De vita sua)* 212n88
2.1.11.1834 *(De vita sua)* 119n148
2.1.12 178, 198–9
2.1.12.1-10 74n93
2.1.12.32-33 178n131
2.1.12.33 179n136
2.1.12.103 179n136
2.1.12.104-6 178n131
2.1.12.751-58 199n18
2.1.13 212
2.1.13.1-13 212n90
2.1.13.26-32 212n91
2.1.13.32-39 69n67
2.1.13.43-55 212n92
2.1.13.75-115 212n93
2.1.13.151-57 66n51
2.1.13.152 213n94
2.1.13.155-57 213n95
2.1.13.175-76 213n96
2.1.13.205-6 213n97
2.1.14 179n133
2.1.14.14-15 179n134
2.1.14.31-32 179n135
2.1.14.31-38 179n136
2.1.14.42 68n59
2.1.15.7-12 179n136
2.1.16.62 5n21
2.1.16.78 73n88
2.1.17 225n154
2.1.17.47-48 179n136
2.1.19.13-16 179n136
2.1.19.91-98 67n54
2.1.30.54-56 179n136
2.1.30.123-28 179n136
2.1.33.12 179n136
2.1.34 198

2.1.34-2.1.38 197
2.1.34.74 176n119
2.1.34.83-84 111n105
2.1.34.210 198n12
2.1.38 198
2.1.38.3 198n13
2.1.38.27 208n65
2.1.38.27-30 198n14
2.1.38.35 26n63
2.1.39 11n2, 21–4, 21n41, 67n56, 77n112
2.1.39.32 22n45
2.1.43 76n110
2.1.45.11-14 62–63, 63n32
2.1.45.29-34 63n32
2.1.45.229-69 72n81
2.1.45.279-80 72n82
2.1.45.295 72n82
2.1.45.333 109n87
2.1.46.37-38 72n84
2.1.50 74
2.1.50.27 71n75
2.1.50.49-50 73n89
2.1.50.67-74 74n98
2.1.50.103-5 74n99
2.1.50.118 75n100
2.1.51.36 69n64
2.1.59.3-7 179n136
2.1.66-102 75n103
2.1.70 81n135
2.1.74.4 69n63
2.1.82.5-6 76n108
2.1.86.5-7 71n71
2.1.87.13-14 76n105
2.1.87.21-24 76n106
2.1.89.30-31 75n101
2.1.89.42-43 75n102
2.1.90-91 55n1
2.1.92 55n1
2.1.92-99 55n1
2.1.93 11n2
2.1.93.10 176n118, 179n136
2.1.94.5-6 75n104
2.1.95.3 71n74
2.1.95.3-4 72n82
2.1.97 76n109
2.2 (Poems that look to others) 68n62
2.2.1.121-23 220n128
2.2.1.366 5n21
2.2.3 20n36
2.2.4.58 20n37
2.2.4.80-88 20n38
2.2.5.1-6 21n39
2.2.5.265-66 21n40
2.2.7.253-55 50n170
2.2 Epitaph. 635n21
2.2 Epitaph. 66–102103n75
Epigrams, Greek Anthology 8.2 206–7n55
Epigrams, Greek Anthology 8.2-11 206–7n55
Epigrams, Greek Anthology 8.4 206–7n55
Epigrams, Greek Anthology 8.7 206r–7n55

Subject Index

Aaron 204
Abraham 88, 138–9, 193
  elder Gregory compared to 153–4, 154n4
  Lazarus and 88, 138–9, 193
  sacrifice of Isaac 187, 218
Abrams Rebillard, Suzanne 5n19, 67n55, 81, 179n133
Adam
  Christ as New 38–9, 48, 91, 134, 138n69
  creation of 25n58
  Gregory as old 39–40, 111, 164, 165
  original sin of 38, 108, 116, 128, 146, 215
  redemption of 200, 201, 212, 215
  sexual relationship with Eve 217, 218
Adoptionism and Adoptionists 128, 132, 134, 142–3
Alexander of Aphrodisias 99–100, 101
Alexandria, bishops of 36, 46, 126–7n12
Alfeyev, Hilarion 163n48
Althaus, Heinz 98n27
Ambrose 2n3
Ammonius 104
Amphilochius of Iconium (cousin of Gregory) 26n63, 126–7n12, 205
anakrasis, see commingling *(anakrasis)*
Anastasia (Constantinople house chapel) 72–3
anathemas 10, 131–51
Anaxagoras 98
angels 17, 34, 53, 160, 164–5, 168, 183, 207, 217
Annunciation 18
Anomoeans, *see* Eunomians and Eunomius
anthropology 105n62, 105n63, 120
anthropology, Gregory's
  importance of Christ in 12n4, 25n58, 84
  mixture language in 106–10, 150–1
  stronger prevailing over weaker 120–1, 148
Antimachus 19
Antiochenes schism 36, 66, 94n10, 128, 129n27, 206n53, 210
  see also Libanius; *Tome to the Antiochenes*
Apocalypse 183n155, 183n156
Apollinarians and Apollinarius 10, 23, 123–51, 182n147
  Adoptionism in teachings of 142–3
  anathemas against 125, 131–50
  on conception and birth of Christ 131n33, 132–9
  Gregory's refutation of 20n35, 22, 24, 27, 47n155, 116, 118, 124n5, 149–50, 156
  on human mind in Christ 114, 115, 143, 147–50
  on Incarnation 139–40, 147–50
  letter to Dionysius 137, 140n79
  on one nature in Christ 94–5n11, 95–6n14, 141–2
  on soul-body union in Christ 105, 135n54
  see also Christology, Apollinarian controversy over
Apollinarius of Laodicea (father and son) 79, 95n14, 126
Apollo, oracles of 50n170
Apostles 166, 218, 223
  see also John the Evangelist, Apostle; Paul, Apostle; Pentecost; Peter, Apostle; Thomas, Apostle
Archetype, the 42, 69, 89
Arianism and Arius, heresies of 46, 114, 127, 129, 137, 146–7, 163n50, 167
  Gregory's refutation of 42, 47n155, 48, 125n7, 142
Aristotle 24n55, 62n30
  influence on Gregory 13, 26
  mixture concept in 98–9, 117
  Peripatetic thought 97, 102, 120
  on predominance 97, 101, 113
asceticism
  Basil's 208n65
  in Christ 25, 214
  Gregory's 72, 85–6, 109, 199–200, 220
  among women 216–17n112
Athanasius
  Arius opposed by 46, 48
  letter to Epictetus 134, 138, 140, 141
  as model pastor 42–3, 205–6, 208, 225
  Nicene theology of 67n53
  on Word of God 12n4, 94–5n11
audiences, Gregory's 30–2, 34, 43, 60n21
Augustine 2n3, 23, 29n78
  autobiographical writings of 4, 57n9
  Confessions 65, 79
  on mysteries of Christ 12n4, 105, 157, 188
autobiography, Gregory's Christomorphic 4–9, 55–90
  Christian and non-Christian models for 59–64

Christ through stages of Gregory's life 58n12, 71–6, 131, 174
in didactic epic form 77–89
in Epiphany orations 162–75
Incarnation doctrine in 150–1, 190–1
Paschal mysteries in 181–91
in poems 68–76, 176
scriptural models for 37–9, 65–7, 160
see also Christology, Gregory's autobiographical; Gregory of Nazianzus
auxēsis (amplification), Gregory's use of 36, 43
Ayres, Lewis 157

baptism
becoming sons of God through 179n138
Christ's 159, 161, 162, 166–9
Gregory's 124, 142, 170, 170n84
inscription of 162–3
oration on 39, 169–75
purification through 164, 166, 169, 173n107
rites of 173n107, 200n22
union with Christ through 7, 56, 141, 163–4
Bartelink, G. J. M. 13n8
Basil of Caesarea (brother of Gregory of Nyssa) 135, 174, 225
on care of the poor 28, 220–1, 221n133
on Christian life 22, 161n41
conflict with Gregory over Sasima 77n111, 86n167
death of 18–19n27
and Diodore 126–7n12
Eunomians' targeting of 137
friendship with Gregory 1–2, 42, 112, 119, 163
Gregory's writings on 24, 68, 181
letters by 14–15n14, 18–19n27
as model pastor 202n35, 205, 206–8, 210n73, 225
on philosophy 26n63, 27–8
portrait of Christ in 47, 157
privacy of 59–60
theology of 78–9n121, 195n1
Beeley, Christopher A. 125n7, 138n69, 139n76, 149n126, 206n53
on Apollinarian heresy 126n11, 128–9
on Christology of Gregory 48, 94–5, 98n27, 115n127, 129n27, 154n7
on Pneumatology of Gregory 191–2n196, 209
on priesthood 201, 224n152
on Trinitarian doctrine of Gregory 8n31, 46n149
Behr, John 27n65, 49, 67n53, 139n76, 182n147
on anathemas of Gregory 128–9n25, 129n27
Benedictines of Saint Maur, classification of Gregory's poetry 68n62, 213–14
Bernardi, Jean 200n22, 203
on *De rebus suis* 79n124, 80n130, 82n141, 86n166
on ordering of Gregory's orations 16n21, 153n1, 153n2
Bethlehem, Nazianzus compared to 5–6
Bible
Old Testament verses
Dan. 3:1–97 83n145
Dan. 3:40 224n152
Dan. 6:2–29 83n145
Deut. 6:13 171
Exod. 3 148
Exod. 3:14 50, 115n125
Exod. 10:21–22 163
Exod. 12:5 185n169
Exod. 13:21–22 163
Exod. 14:21–31 208n66
Exod. 15:20–21 34n98
Exod. 15:23 49n165
Exod. 17:8–14 83n144
Exod. 19:3–25 31
Exod. 19:13 177n123
Exod. 24:9–12 31
Exod. 25:50 185
Exod. 33:21–23 46–7n153
1 Sam. 2:22–36 31
1 Sam. 4:10–18 31
Gen. 1:3 170n90
Gen. 1:26–27 115n125, 128
Gen. 2:9 49n165
Gen. 2:16–17 170n90
Gen. 3:32 49n165
Gen. 11:1–9 102
Gen. 22 154
Gen. 22:2 154n4
Gen. 28 207n60
Gen. 41:1–45 207n60
Gen 18 148
Hab. 2:1 182n151
Hos. 5:2 43–4
Hos. 6:6 224n152
Isa. 1:3 165
Isa. 7:14 186n170
Isa. 8:3 186n170
Isa. 9:1 41n128, 163
Isa. 9:6 163
Isa. 10:22–23 19
Isa. 28:25 32n89

Bible (*cont.*)
Isa. 50:5 204n42
Isa. 53:4 149n125
Isa. 53:4–7 49n165
Isa. 53:7 204n42
Jer. 4:3 32n89
Job 29:15–16 43n136
Job 31:32 43n136
Jonah 2:1–11 83n145
Jonah 3:51–90 83n145
Jos. 3:7–17 208n66
Prov. 8:22 135n55
Prov. 9:5 17n23
Prov. 31:10–31 43n134
Ps. 1 80
Ps. 4:8–9 44n143
Ps. 8 109
Ps. 8:5 109n93
Ps. 24 189
Ps. 33:6 193
Ps. 48 (49):2 34n97
Ps. 67:3 92n4, 113n117
Ps. 78:24 207n61
Ps. 82:6 179, 179n138
Ps. 90 (91) 85
Ps. 105:15 205n49
Ps. 109 136
2 Sam. 6:2–8 31
2 Sam. 6:14 165
2 Sam. 23 221n136
Sir. 43:4 92n4, 113n117
Song 5:16 49n165
Wis. 13:13 32n89
New Testament verses
Acts 2:13 211
Acts 7:54-8:1 180n140
Acts 7:60 180n141
Acts 14:19 180n140
Acts 24:16 52n179
Col. 1:15–20 156n14
Col. 1:16 145
Col. 1:18 91n1, 161n40
Col. 2:9 115n125
Col. 2:9–3 164n51
Col. 2:12 154n9, 222n141
Col. 2:12–13 110n95
Col. 3 164n51
Col. 3:5 179n138
Col. 3:10 154n7
Col 2:12 171n93
Eph. 2:6 154n9, 171n93
Eph. 2:13–16 119n148
Eph. 2:13–18 119n146
Eph. 2:14 187n179, 203
Eph. 3:17 145, 200
Eph. 4:8–9 49n165
Eph. 4:24 154n7
Eph. 5:23 91n1
Eph. 5:23–27 172n98
Eph. 6:19 156n14
Eph. 3:17 144n104
1 Cor. 2:13 36n112
1 Cor. 6:15 136n58
1 Cor. 7:23 186
1 Cor. 8:6 138n69
1 Cor. 9:19–22 41
1 Cor. 9:21 41n126
1 Cor. 10:1 168–9
1 Cor. 11:1 65n46
1 Cor. 11:23–27 156n14
1 Cor. 12:13 173
1 Cor. 13:7 42
1 Cor. 13:13 222n138
1 Cor. 15:1–11 65
1 Cor. 15:20 161n40
1 Cor. 15:20–28 92
1 Cor. 15:22 91n121
1 Cor. 15:27–28 91n1
1 Cor. 15:45 91n1
1 Cor. 15:45–47 136n58
1 Cor. 15:45–49 38n118
1 Cor. 15:47–48 144, 144n104
1 Cor. 16:22 144n104
1 Pet. 2:24 49n165
1 Pet. 1:18-19 186
1 Thess. 5:19 52
1 Tim. 5:21 174n108
Gal. 1:8–9 125n6
Gal. 2:10 32n88
Gal. 2:19 164n51
Gal. 2:19–20 65n46
Gal. 3:13 41, 91n1, 149n124, 202n32
Gal. 3:27 154n7
Gal. 4:4 156n14
Heb. 2:6 109n93
Heb. 5:7–8 92
Heb. 4:12 11n2
Heb. 10:1 185
Heb. 13:8 163n49
John 1:1 13, 41, 49n165, 54
John 1:3 145
John 1:14 54, 93, 149
John 1:23 49n165
John 1:29 91n1
John 2:1–11 172n98
John 2:7–9 49n165
John 3:13 144, 144n104
John 3:14 188n181
John 3:29 172n98
John 4:14 172n102
John 5:21 49n165
John 6:38 93

John 8:12 166, 166n67
John 8:58 138
John 8:58–59 176
John 8:59 10
John 10:17–18 49n165
John 10:30–39 176
John 10:31 10
John 10:32 178
John 10:34 179
John 12:12–19 206n50
John 13:1–20 173
John 14 13
John 14:2 222n139
John 14:9 19–20
John 14:16 192n203
John 14:28 49n168
John 14:31 223n147
John 16:15 18–19n27
John 20:3 172n101
John 20:8–9 49n165
John 20:28 68n59, 130n30, 173
Luke 1:33 131–2n35
Luke 1:43 132
Luke 1:44 165
Luke 2 156
Luke 2:24 183
Luke 2:52 143
Luke 5:8 31
Luke 6 17n22
Luke 7:36–50 44
Luke 12:50 124
Luke 14:15–24 175n113
Luke 17:19–31 88
Luke 18:10–14 87
Luke 19:1–10 32n87
Luke 19:9 167n70
Luke 19:28–40 206n50
Luke 20:16 136n58
Luke 23:43 49n165
Mark 1:7 168
Mark 4:11 156n14
Mark 4:37–41 72
Mark 5:25–34 44
Mark 9:35 49n165
Mark 10:38 124
Mark 11:1–10 206n50
Mark 11:12–22 88n174
Mark 15:23 221n136
Mark 15:24 49n165
Mark 16:19 49n165
Matt. 3:3 163
Matt. 4:10 171n94
Matt. 4:15–16 41n126
Matt. 4:16 163
Matt. 5:7 207
Matt. 5:14 166
Matt. 7:2 173
Matt. 7:13 79n131
Matt. 7:13–14 80, 214
Matt. 8:8 31
Matt. 8:17 65n46, 149n125, 202n32
Matt. 9:13 224n152
Matt. 10:38 156n14
Matt. 13:5–7 32n89
Matt. 13:52 44
Matt. 14:22–33 83n147
Matt. 14:31 84n153
Matt. 15:21–28 169
Matt. 17:24 40
Matt. 17:27 40n125
Matt. 18:6 40n125
Matt. 19:1–12 37, 39–42, 215, 216, 219
Matt. 21:1–9 206n50
Matt. 21:14–16 206n50
Matt. 21:15 206n51
Matt. 22:1–14 175n113, 208
Matt. 22:34–40 222n139
Matt. 25:1–13 174–5
Matt. 25:31–26 29
Matt. 25:31–46 223
Matt. 26:29 188n185
Matt. 27:45 49n165
Matt. 27:46 92n2
Matt. 27:48 49n165
Matt. 27:50–52 49n165
Matt. 27:60 49n165
Matt. 28:6 49n165
Phil. 1:10 52n179
Phil. 1:21 65
Phil. 2 93n5
Phil. 2:6 49
Phil. 2:7 92, 93, 115n125, 115n127, 172n100, 181n144, 209
Phil. 2:15 169n83
Phil. 2:16 169n83
Phil. 2:17 92n4
Rev. 1:6 52n179
Rev. 1:10 183
Rev. 2:7 49n165
Rom. 1:16 159
Rom. 5:6 65n46
Rom. 5:12–13 38n118
Rom. 6:3–4 164n51
Rom. 6:3–11 156n14, 171n93
Rom. 6:4 110n95, 154n9, 171n93, 222n141
Rom. 8:14–18 110n95
Rom. 8:17 171n93, 222n141
Rom. 8:29 138, 161n40
Rom. 9:3 65n46
Rom. 9:28 19
Rom. 10:12 115n125

Bible (*cont.*)
Rom. 12:1 202n36
Rom. 13:12 163
Rom. 13:14 154n7, 172n99
2 Cor. 3:6 41n128, 163
2 Cor. 5:20 52
2 Cor. 5:21 41, 91n1, 149n124
2 Cor. 8 93n5
2 Cor. 8:9 93, 110n96, 115n125, 220
2 Cor. 11:2 172n98
2 Cor. 11:25 180n140
2 Cor. 11:30-12:10 65
2 Cor. 13:7 41n128
2 Cor. 8:9 207n56, 222
2 Pet. 1:4 179n138
2 Tim. 1:10 49n165
2 Tim. 4:1 49n165
Tit. 3:4 178n127
see also Scripture
binding, language of 107–10, 190
see also joining, Gregory's use of term; juxtaposition *(parathesis)*
bios, Gregory's use of term 14, 53, 154, 199
bishops 36, 46, 126–7n12, 205
corruption of 74, 209–13, 225
Gregory's problems with 73, 124
blending *(krasis)*
Aristotle's concept of 98, 99–100
of God with humanity 3, 224
Gregory's use of term 94, 116, 119, 136, 161, 175
see also mixture *(mixis)*
body, human
resurrection of 76n107, 143–4
salvation of 84
soul's union with 95–6, 95–6n14, 99, 101, 103–10, 114, 120, 132, 146–7
see also Jesus Christ, flesh of; Jesus Christ, humanity of; mind, human; Word of God, Gregory's theology of, enfleshment
Børtnes, Jostein 108n83
Bouchet, Jean-René 105n63, 114n122
Bouteneff, Peter 8n31, 164n53, 201n25
Brown, Peter 15n16
Byzantine traditions 59, 62, 157, 215, 228

Caesarius (brother of Gregory) 42, 154n4
death of 18–19n27, 75
dispute over estate of 77, 78
funeral oration for 16, 109
Camelot, Pierre-Thomas 12
Cantalamessa, Raniero 184n160
Cappadocia, province of, Gregory in 1, 73–4, 116, 168, 190n193
Cappadocian Fathers 1–2, 157, 161–2n43, 179n138
care of the poor by 220–1n132
on the Incarnation 114, 202n31
philanthropy of 28, 220–1n132
on the Trinity 46n148, 47, 96–7n18, 195n1, 202n31
see also Basil of Caesarea (brother of Gregory of Nyssa); Gregory of Nazianzus; Gregory of Nyssa (brother of Basil of Caesarea)
Casel, Odo 157, 158
celibacy 39–42, 213–19
Chalcedonian theology 10, 227 *see also* Council of Chalcedon (451)
charity, *see* love; poor people, care of
Christianity and Christians 7, 22, 23, 36, 69, 104
faith of 40, 46, 77, 107, 131, 156
good deeds by 28–32
Greek 2, 15, 56n3
Gregory's autobiography modeled on 59–64
life in Christ 28, 56, 61, 67, 162–4, 167, 171, 172n99, 175, 214
Orthodox 1, 56, 62n31, 139n76
participation in Christ's mysteries 1–2, 154–5, 156–7, 161, 164, 165–6, 167n74
philosophy in 25, 28, 33
Trinity in soul of 23, 42
truth of 33–4
unity of 119, 120
worship of Christ crucified 132, 141–2
see also Church, early; Fathers, Church; sacraments
Christmas 158–9, 160, 161–3, 183
see also Epiphany
Christology
of Church Fathers 4, 120
dualist 138n69, 143
Gregory of Nyssa's 181
of Nemesius 105n63
Christology, Apollinarian controversy over 123–51
anathemas directed at 125, 131–50
rhetorical context 123–31
see also Apollinarians and Apollinarius
Christology, Gregory's autobiographical 3–10, 12n5, 120–1, 165
on Christ's two natures 3–4, 5n20, 127–8
mixture language in 4–10, 91–121, 164n56, 193
mysteries of Christ explained in 7–8, 9–10, 150–1, 181–91
salvation in 8–9, 10, 146, 150–1, 161

Scriptural basis 45–54
Trinitarian thinking related to 58n12, 216
Word's place in 45–54, 124
see also autobiography, Gregory's Christomorphic; Incarnation, Gregory's theology of; Jesus Christ; Word of God, Gregory's theology of
Chrysippus 99–101
Church, early 17–18, 156, 215, 225
see also Cappadocian Fathers; Christianity and Christians; Greece and Greeks, Church Fathers
classics
Emperor Julian's prohibition against teaching 22, 79
influences on Gregory's writing 24, 57, 60–1
see also Greece and Greeks; Hellenism
Cledonius 123, 128, 130, 134, 220n128
Clement of Alexandria 13n10, 33, 172n98
Coakley, Sarah 117n133
Codex Sinaiticus Graecus 228
commingling *(anakrasis)* 112, 119
see also blending *(krasis);* mixture *(mixis)*
communication of idioms, theory of 144–5
compassion 81, 108n81, 217, 222, 224
see also poor people, care of
composition *(synthesis)* 102, 106n67, 118, 217
Aristotle's concept of 98, 99–100, 117
comprehension, *see* understanding
conscience, examination of 33
Constantinople 48n161, 58, 173n107
see also Council of Constantinople I (381)
Constantinople, Gregory's time in 31, 190n193
as archbishop of 162, 168n76, 196n7, 210–11
congregation 22n47, 72–3
at Council of Constantinople 2, 86–7, 124, 227
departure 27n66, 58, 116, 210, 211
contemplation 34, 180, 197, 199, 209, 221
see also silence, Gregory's practice of
conversion 65, 223
Cooper, Adam G. 128n20
Cosmas of Jerusalem 228
Coulie, Bernard 220n130
Council of Chalcedon (451) 2, 7, 30, 94n10
see also Chalcedonian theology
Council of Constantinople I (381) 1, 30, 73, 126, 210, 211–12
Gregory's participation in 2, 86–7, 124, 227
heresies at time of 129, 137
Council of Nicaea I (325) 1, 2, 73, 121, 125n7, 212
see also Nicenes
Council of Rome (377) 128, 139, 146–7
see also Rome, bishops of
Crates of Thebes 28
creation, Gregory's theology of 8n30, 108n83
mixture in 24–5, 111, 167–8, 193
Word of God's connection to 51, 107, 110
Cribore, Raffaella 63n34, 64n37
Crucifixion, Christ's, *see* Jesus Christ, crucifixion of
culture(s)
Christian 36
Greek 15, 53
Latin 20n36
pagan 15, 16n18
Cyprian, Saint 42, 131n34, 181
Cyril of Alexandria 3, 94, 94–5n11, 95–6n14, 140, 227

Daley, Brian E. 46n148, 169n82
on Apollinarius 131n33, 141n88
on care of the poor 220–1n132, 223n150
on Christian philosophy 5n20, 28
on Gregory 15n15, 39n121, 45, 190n193
on Origen 88n172
on priesthood 201n29, 202n31
Damasus, Pope 123n1, 129, 136n61, 146
Daniel, Book of 83, 183
see also under Bible, Old Testament verses
David (Old Testament) 23, 165, 221
death 112, 188
life after 75–6
Paul on 92, 179n138
deeds, good, purification through 28–32
see also philanthropy *(philanthrōpia),* Christian; poor people, care of; purification
deification/divinization
Christ's role in 52, 79, 84, 113
Gregory's doctrine of 8n30, 61n27, 113, 174n111, 179–80, 198, 228
Holy Spirit's role in 89, 195
of human beings 85n, 107, 162–3
as priestly ministry 62, 203
through the resurrection 107, 110, 142, 155
Demacopoulos, George 205n47
Demoen, Kristoffel 20n36, 44n141, 66
on *De rebus suis* 77n111, 81n132, 86n167
Demosthenes 64
devil, the 108, 109, 112, 171, 200n22
Didymus 15n15
differentiation, principle of 25n59, 48
Diodore of Tarsus 126, 126–7n12, 137n63, 146n14, 150
Gregory's refutation of 128, 140
on soul-body union 95–6n14, 146–7
and two Sons controversy 129, 136–7

Dionysius, Apollinarian letter to 137, 140n79
Dioscorus 3
divinization, *see also* deification/divinization
  divorce, Christ's teachings on 39–40
  see also marriage
docetism and docetists 126, 133
Driver, G. R. 142n94
dualism 94, 109, 129, 138n69, 143
Dunkle, Brian P. 68n58

Easter 10, 157, 158–9, 181–91, 184n160
Ebionites 134–5
economy, divine 45–52, 89, 174
  see also salvation, Gregory's theology of
Egan, John P. 12n4
ekphrasis, Gregory's use of 37, 43–4
Eli (Old Testament) 31
Ellverson, Anna-Stina 25n58
Elm, Susanna 15n16, 33, 96n16, 116n128, 139n76, 170n84
  on Gregory's writings 13n10, 43n132, 153n1, 162–3, 170n85, 173, 199–200
Empedocles 78, 98
Epictetus, Athanasius' letter to 134, 138, 140, 141
Epiphanius 127n13, 133, 134, 142–3, 195n1
Epiphany 10, 157, 161–75, 191
  see also Theophany, feast of
Eucharist 44, 141, 192–3, 205
Eudoxians and Eudoxius, heresies of 129, 137
Eunomians and Eunomius
  Gregory's refutation of 27, 47–8, 91, 92, 116, 118
  heresies of 49, 54, 129, 137, 162
  Nicenes' refutation of 162n45
eunuchs 215, 216
Eusebius of Caesarea 65, 137–8, 180n141
Eusebius of Emesa 131–2n35
Eustathius of Antioch 135, 135n54
Eutyches 156
Evagrius Ponticus 7, 18–19n27, 19n34
evangelical witness, influence on Gregory's writings 13, 17n23, 47, 57
Eve
  original sin with Adam 108, 215
  sexual relationship with Adam 217, 218
evil 69, 81n135, 85, 112
Exodus, Book of 154, 185–6
  see also under Bible, Old Testament verses

faith
  Christian 40, 46, 77, 107, 119, 130, 131, 156, 200n22
  Gregory's 6–7, 53, 75, 173–4
Father (God) 35, 47n155, 83n142
  as creator 25n58, 112
  Holy Spirit's relationship to 49–50, 51, 68, 79, 89
  names of 50, 88
  Son's/Word's relationship to 49–50, 51, 54, 68–9, 91–2, 115n125, 125n7, 132
  see also God; Son of God; Trinity, Gregory's theology of
Fathers, Church 36, 62n31
  Christology of 97, 120, 156
  see also Cappadocian Fathers; Greece and Greek, Church Fathers
Finn, Thomas M. 173n107
Focken, Johannes 26
Frankl, Victor 67n55
Fulford, Ben 114n118
fusion *(synchysis)* 36, 43, 100, 101–2

Galatians, Paul's letter to 124–5, 136n58
  see also under Bible, New Testament verses
Gallay, Paul 14–15n14, 35n105, 153n2
Garden of Eden 164n53, 186, 189
  see also Paradise
Gautier, Francis 79, 128n22
generosity 28, 43, 172
  see also poor people, care of
Genesis, Book of, creation accounts in 108n83
  see also under Bible, Old Testament, verses
Gilbert, Peter 37n114, 57–8n10, 84n152
Giulea, Dragoș-Andrei 181, 182
Gnosticism and Gnostics 126, 128
God 13n10, 31, 83n42, 106n67, 107, 156
  assistance from 37–8, 78, 87, 174
  becoming human 62n31, 84, 105n62, 113, 130, 167–8
  Christians' faith in 23, 46
  Gregory's experience of 5, 6, 7, 75
  names of 50–1, 83n142
  as *nous* 25n28, 85n155
  power of 92, 159
  three persons in 46n148, 47n154, 136, 167
  unity with 52, 85, 146, 179n138
  see also Father (God); Trinity, Gregory's theology of
Golden Chain, symbolism of 80–1
Good Samaritan, parable of 86–7
Gorgonia (sister of Gregory) 42, 204
  death of 75
  Gregory's funeral oration for 43–5, 66–7
Gospels
  in Gregory's life 67, 68n58, 172
  life of 42–5
  parables and stories from 47, 86–7, 88

proclamation of 183, 202n31
Word of God in 35–45
see also under Bible, New Testament verses
grace, Christ's 139–41, 143
Greece and Greeks
Church Fathers 2, 15, 56n3
culture of 15, 53, 164
influence on Gregory's doctrines 33–4, 86
Julian's restrictions against teaching classics of 22, 79
letter writing models 19, 20n36
philosophy and rhetoric of 13, 28
see also Aristotle; Hellenism; Homer; Plato and Platonism; Stoicism and Stoics
Greer, Rowan A. 144
Gregory I, Pope 2n3, 199n20
Gregory of Nazianzus 23, 208
as Archbishop of Constantinople 162, 168n76, 196n7, 210–11
baptism of 124, 142, 170
Basil of Caesarea's friendship with 1–2, 42, 86n167, 112, 119, 153, 154n4
birth of 1
body-soul union in 106–10, 113
in Cappadocia 1, 73–4, 116, 168, 190n193
Christ in life of 64, 70, 71–6, 82–9, 108n83, 132, 180–1, 195
death of 1
elected bishop of Sasima 73, 77n111, 124, 196n7, 209, 210
episcopal service in Constantinople 22n47, 27n65, 31, 58, 72–3, 116
faith of 6–7, 41–2, 61, 75, 78n117, 130, 150, 173–4
family of 42–3, 43n132, 55n1
mother 58n12, 71, 72, 75–6, 80, 87, 212n90
Gregory of Nyssa's friendship with 1–2, 197n10
as "herald of the Word" 11
illnesses of 74–5
mixture concept in life of 91–2, 106–10, 154
in Nazianzus 199, 203–4, 208, 225
as old Adam 39–40, 111
prayers of 55–6, 69, 71–2, 79, 82–9, 223n151
rivals to 3–4
role models of 42–3
salvation through Christ 110–14, 115–16, 125, 128, 155, 190–1
sea travels 71–2, 78n117
spirituality of 4, 6, 12n5, 156–61
stoning of 10, 63n35, 175–81, 191
sufferings of 18–19n27, 81
as "the Theologian" 2–3, 4
vision accounts 72, 78n117, 182–4
will and testament of 227
writings of (*see also Index of Works*)
autobiographical 4–5, 55, 57–58
classical styles 14–24
didactic epic form 77–89
geography in 41n128
Hellenic influences on 12n5, 15, 17n23, 47, 53, 79, 81n132
imagery in 59, 170n85, 174
intertextuality in 154, 179
language use 13–14, 162–3
letters 6, 11n2, 14, 18–21, 123–5
light theme in 105, 163n48, 166–9, 170, 175–6n115
orations 6, 14, 16–18, 47–50, 75, 153n1, 153n2, 163–75
poems 5n19, 9, 12n5, 14, 21–4, 55n1, 56–7, 61, 62n30, 67–76, 148n121, 176, 211n81, 213–14
see also autobiography, Gregory's Christomorphic; Caesarius (brother of Gregory); Christology, Gregory's autobiographical; Constantinople, Gregory's time in; Gorgonia (sister of Gregory); Gregory of Nazianzus, the elder (father of Gregory); Incarnation, Gregory's theology of; salvation, Gregory's theology of; Trinity, Gregory's theology of; Word of God, Gregory's theology of
Gregory of Nazianzus, ministry of 195–225
anti-models of 203n40, 209–13
Christ in 195, 204–9
episcopal assignments 196n7, 197, 209
marriage and virginity concerns 213–19
models of 10, 106, 203–4, 204–9, 225
ordination to 153, 172n98, 199–204
pastoral leadership 175, 180–1, 191, 195–7, 198–9, 225
service to rich and poor 207, 220–4
writings on 24n55, 62, 73
see also priesthood
Gregory of Nazianzus, the elder (father of Gregory) 42, 154n4, 208
accusations of heresy against 58n12, 71, 153, 200
Gregory's assistance to 73, 124, 209
Gregory's relationship with 58n12, 75, 199–200
Gregory of Nyssa (brother of Basil of Caesarea) 141n88, 202n35, 206n54, 220–1
on Basil 59, 65, 206–8
on Christ's life 47, 66, 157, 181
Gregory's friendship with 1–2, 197n10
on the Incarnation 114, 120
letters by 14–15n14, 145n106

Gregory of Nyssa (brother of Basil of Caesarea) (*cont.*)
philosophy of 26n63, 27–8
on soul-body union 95–6n14, 105, 117n133
on the Trinity 126–7n12, 195n1
use of rhetoric 29–35
Grillmeier, Aloys 4, 84n151, 98n27, 120, 130n29, 156–7

Habakkuk 182, 183n153
Hadot, Pierre 13n7, 27, 60, 61
Harrison, Nonna Verna 154n9, 157, 160
on *Festal Orations* 154, 158, 161–2n43
on mixture language 96, 96–7n18, 98n27
Heath, Malcolm 63n34
heaven 75–6, 82, 221–2, 223
Hebrews, *see* Israelites; Judaism
Hebrews, Letter to 205
see also under Bible, New Testament verses
Hellenism 15n16, 87
influence on Gregory's writings 12n5, 15, 17n23, 47, 53, 79, 81n132
see also Greece and Greeks; Stoicism and Stoics
henōsis, see union *(henōsis)*
Heraclitus 12
heresies, *see* Incarnation, heresies regarding; Jesus Christ, heresies regarding; *and individual heresies and heretics*
hermeneutics, Gregory's 14, 36–7, 40, 45–52, 160–1, 185, 188
Hesiod 78, 81n132, 86
Himerios 196, 197
Hodgson, L. 142n94
Holl, Karl 137n63
Holman, Susan R. 220–1n132, 221
Holy Spirit 83n142, 112
Christ's relationship to 68, 192, 200, 202
descent of 192–3
divinity of 2, 47n155, 125n7, 149, 179, 191–2
Father's relationship to 49–50, 51, 68, 79, 89
role in divinization 89, 140
visions from 182–3
see also Trinity, Gregory's theology of
Homer 19, 80
influences on Gregory's writing 55, 77, 79, 81n132, 86n165, 216
prayers of 44, 87
homoousios, use of term 125
Huertas Bénin, R. M. 79
human beings 94n9, 106n67, 117, 170n88
God's presence in 37–8, 105n62, 128, 167
mixture language applied to 25, 130–1
Word of God mingling with 51, 91, 110–14
see also body, human; deification; divinization; mind, human
humility 181, 196
hypostasis 4, 25n85

Ignatius of Antioch 130
imitatio, see Jesus Christ, imitation of; *mimēsis (imitatio)*
Incarnation, Gregory's theology of 84, 97, 115n125, 150–1, 157, 160–1, 163, 202n31
crucifixion as fulfillment of 182, 185–6, 204
God's presence in 105n62, 190–1
healing through 35, 39
heresies regarding 111–14, 125–31, 134–5, 138n69, 139–40, 147–50, 161–2n43
historical dimension of 144–5
human mind's mediation in 114–17, 120
Mary's role in 133–9, 174
mixture language applied to 3, 9–10, 24–5, 84, 92–6, 105–6, 114–19, 168, 191, 200
mystery of 7–8, 18, 117–18
rhetorical treatment of 125–31
salvation through 23, 69, 130–1, 187–8
see also Word of God, Gregory's theology of, Incarnation of
intermingling *(synkrasis)* 6, 9, 43, 92, 95, 96–7n18, 113–14
Irenaeus 25n58, 38, 62n31, 83n142, 86, 133–4, 179n138
Isaac 154, 187
Isaiah 204
Isaiah, Book of 41, 186
see also under Bible, Old Testament verses
Ishmael 154n4
Isocrates 13
Israelites 23, 50, 83n142
see also Judaism

Jeremiah 204
Jerome 2n3, 15n15, 216n110
on Gregory 4, 16–17, 17n22
Jesus Christ 41, 51, 62, 159, 175, 203, 223, 224n152
baptism of 124, 159, 161, 162, 164, 166–9
as the Bridegroom 174–5, 215, 216
care of the poor 17–18, 220, 222
Christians' life in 28, 56, 61, 157, 162–7, 171, 172n99, 175, 214
conception and birth of 17–18, 131, 132–9, 144–5, 174
crucifixion of 39–40, 92, 131–2, 141–2, 165, 174, 180–2, 201, 204
divinity of 48–9, 92, 94n10, 114, 115n125, 145, 163n50, 177, 179

faith in 41–2, 61, 130, 131, 150, 200n22
flesh of 18, 25, 72, 76n107, 87, 144–5, 148–9, 168, 207, 212, 215, 217
grace of 139–41, 143
Gregory's identification with 4–9, 56, 92, 131, 154, 159–60, 175–6, 191, 221
in Gregory's poems 69–71
healing by 35, 38–9, 40–2, 44, 67, 82, 84, 130, 176
heresies regarding 131–50
Holy Spirit's relationship to 68, 192, 200, 202
humanity of 3, 48–9, 70, 85, 88n174, 94–5, 103, 118, 131, 141, 163n50, 177, 187–8, 192
imitation of 28–9, 65–6, 69, 159–60
life in 64, 67, 70, 71–6, 82–9, 132, 180–1, 195
mind in 82–9, 114–17, 129–30, 132, 143, 147–8, 149
ministry of 40–1, 200–4, 208–9
miracles by 17, 72, 83, 88, 139, 176
as New Adam 38–9, 48, 91, 134, 138n69
passion of 35, 159, 221n136
Paul's union with 52, 154, 163–4
prayers to 55–6, 56n3, 69, 79, 82, 223n151
rational soul of 95, 114–17, 135–8
resurrection of 132, 139, 143–4, 161, 198
salvation through 8–10, 25n58, 40–1, 56, 69, 75–6, 91, 110–14, 125, 157, 159–61, 190
sufferings of 18–19n27, 41, 74, 118, 124, 187n176, 188–9, 224n152
symbolism of 41, 224, 225
titles of 42, 50–3, 55, 56n3, 70–1, 77, 79n125, 88–9, 113–14, 145, 170, 177, 190, 203
two natures in 3–4, 5n20, 10, 38–9, 70n69, 93, 95n14, 113, 114n122, 119–20, 127–8, 135, 144–5
unity in 46n148, 48–9, 94n8, 97, 108n81, 109–10, 117, 129–30, 142 *see also* autobiography, Gregory's Christomorphic; Christology; Christology, Apollinarian controversy over; Christology, Gregory's autobiographical; mixture *(mixis);* Son of God; Trinity, Gregory's theology of; Word of God, Gregory's theology of
Jesus Christ, mysteries of 88n174, 153–93, 200–2
Christian participation in 161, 163–4, 165–6, 167n74, 173
Christmas 158–9, 160
Epiphany 157, 161–75
mixture language applied to 95, 110
Paschal 157, 158–9, 160, 181–91
stoning 10, 175–81, 191
see also Incarnation, Gregory's doctrine
Job 43, 74
John Chrysostom 2, 27–8, 66, 199n20
John of Damascus 59
Johnson, Nancy 161n41
John the Baptist 42, 163, 165, 168, 169, 172n98
John the Evangelist, Apostle 2n6, 172, 183, 183n155
joining, Gregory's use of term 3, 139–40, 175
see also binding, language of; juxtaposition *(parathesis)*
Jonah 83, 196n8, 203–4
Joseph of Arimathea 224
Judaism 126, 135, 149
see also Israelites
Julian (tax collector) 13n8, 160
Julian, Emperor 13n8
Gregory's invective against 13n8, 16, 28, 33–4, 43, 53, 181
Oration to the Uneducated Cynics 61–2, 64
restrictions against teaching Greek classics 22, 79
Justin Martyr 83
juxtaposition *(parathesis)* 93, 97, 100–4, 110, 119
see also binding, language of; joining, Gregory's use of term

Kennedy, George 24–6, 47n154
kenōsis, Gregory's use of term 93n5
see also theōsis
Keydell, R. 79n125
koinōnia, see partnership *(koinōnia)*
Konstan, David 206n54
krasis, see blending *(krasis)*

Lamb, Passover 185–6
Lampe, G. W. H. 56n3
laws 185–6, 215
Lazarus 88, 139, 193
Leclercq, Dom Jean 12
Leontius of Byzantium 98n27
leprosy 222, 223
Libanius 16, 63–4
Lienhard, Joseph T. 137n63, 138, 138n69
life after death, *see* heaven; salvation, Gregory's theology of
light, theme of 105, 163n48, 166–9, 170, 175–6n115
Limberis, Vasiliki 33n96, 197n10
liturgical anamnesis 158–60
logos, Gregory's use of term 11–14, 53, 154, 199, 201
see also Word of God, Gregory's theology of

liturgical anamnesis (*cont.*)
logostherapy 67, 79–82 *see also* Jesus Christ, healing by
Lossky, Vladimir 62n31
love 28, 42, 61, 106, 221–2
Lucretius 78, 79

Macedonius, heresies of 129
McGuckin, John A. 2n7, 89, 126n11, 153n3, 207n63, 227n1
  on autobiographical writings of Gregory 58, 78n117
  on *De rebus suis* 77, 81n135, 86n166
  on mixture concept 107n72, 109n92
  on orations of Gregory 14–15n14, 17n22, 40, 44n142, 153n2
  on poetry of Gregory 21, 22–3
McGuire, Martin 16n18
McLynn, Neil B. 12n5, 20n36, 77n111, 79, 79n126, 211n81
Macrina (sister of Basil of Caesarea) 59
Malingrey, Anne-Marie 27, 28
Mamas (martyr) 190
Manichaeans and Manichaeism 127n3, 143
manifestation, use of term 142n94
Manoah 167
Marcellus, heresies of 127, 131–2n35, 135n54, 137n63, 138n67, 140
Marcus Aurelius, Emperor, *Meditations* 60–1, 64
Marcian, Emperor, Chalcedon's Address to 3
Mariology, Gregory's 14–15n14
  see also Mary, Virgin, as Theotokos
marriage 39–42, 213–19, 225
Marshall, Bruce 83n142
Mary (at the tomb) 224
Mary, Virgin, as Theotokos 131, 132–9, 174
  Matthew, Gospel of 41, 171
  see also under Bible, New Testament verses
Matz, Brian J. 221n133
Maximos 78n117
Maximus the Confessor 29, 94, 109, 187n178, 216n110, 227
Meehan, Denis 78–9n121
Meerson, Olga 56
Meletius of Antioch 146, 210, 211
Menander 36, 179
mercy 88, 177–8, 180
Meredith, Anthony 17n23
Milovanović-Barham, Čelicia 11n2, 16n21, 220–1n132
  on *De rebus suis* 78, 79, 86n165, 86n166
  on mixture language 98n27
  on poetry of Gregory 22, 24
mimēsis (imitatio) 36, 62n30, 159–61, 189, 200
mind, human 67n55, 128, 215–16
  Christ's elevation of 25n58, 79, 82–9, 85n115, 129–30, 131, 132, 148–9
  mediation in the Incarnation 114–17, 120
  see also body, human
ministry, *see* Gregory of Nazianzus, ministry of; Paul, Apostle, ministry of; priesthood
miracles 44, 208n66
  Christ's 17, 72, 83, 88, 139, 176
Miriam, song of 34
Misch, Georg 63n33
mixture *(mixis)* 91–121
  Aristotle's use of term 98, 99–100
  of Christ's life with Gregory's 4–10, 70, 86, 91–2, 150–1, 179–81, 195, 227–8
  of Christ's two natures 5n20, 38, 109, 114, 135
  in Gregory's life 91–2, 106–10, 154
  multiplicity and unity in 117–19, 136
  philosophical basis of 95n13, 96–106
  for salvation 10, 110–14
  use of term 4, 9–10, 149 *see also* blending *(krasis);* Incarnation, Gregory's theology of, mixture language applied to; Word of God, Gregory's theology of, mixture language applied to
modalism and modalists 126
Molac, Philippe 175
monasticism 156
Monothelite controversy 94, 227
Montanism and Montanists 126, 127
Moreschini, Claudio 36, 96n16
Moses 17, 46, 83, 167, 174, 204
  baptism of 168–9
  conversation with God 31, 193
Mossay, Justin 31n86, 76
multiplicity in mixture 117–19, 136
Murphy, Austin G. 13n7, 203n40
Musurillo, Herbert 57n9
mysteries, divine
  of Christian life 56, 154–5, 156
  Gregory's explanations of 1–2, 7–8, 9–10
  see also Incarnation, Gregory's theology of; Jesus Christ, mysteries of
mysticism 156

Nativity, feast of 163–6
  see also Christmas; Epiphany
Naucratius (brother of Basil of Caesarea) 59
Nazianzus 10, 153n3, 160
  Bethlehem aligned with 5–6
  Gregory in 208, 209
  Gregory's flight from 199, 203–4, 225
Nectarius 14–15n14, 58, 78n117, 123, 126–7n12

Nemesius of Emesa 95–6n14, 98n27, 103, 104–5, 105n62
neo-Arianism 161–2n43
Neoplatonism 96, 102, 105, 120
Nestorius 3, 126–7n12, 133, 140, 142n94, 156, 227
Nicenes 153n3, 162n45, 206n53
  controversies of 50, 156
  theology of 67n53, 125n7, 135, 157, 166
  see also Council of Nicaea I (325)
Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed 2
Nicetas of Heraclea 190n193
Nicoboulus (father and son) 18–19, 20–1, 23
Nicodemus 224
Noah 213
Noble, Thomas A. 47n155
Nock, A. D. 26
Nonnus, poetry by 14–15n14
Norman, A. F. 64n37
Norris, Frederick 180
  on Christology of Gregory 8, 40, 51n174, 93n5, 94n9
  on Gregory's writings 13–14n10, 13–14n11, 14–15n14, 35
  on heresies 48n163, 137n63
  on rhetoric 25, 26–7
Norris, Richard A. 95–6n14
nous 25n58, 85n115
Novatianism and Novatianists 126, 127, 169

obedience 91, 92
obliteration, Aristotle's concept of 97
Olympius, Gregory's letter to 20n35
oneness
  of Christ 46n148, 48, 70n69, 95, 109–10
  Gregory's use of term 118–19, 120
  Trinity's 83n142, 149–50, 201–2
  see also unity
Opperwall, Daniel G. 191–2n196
Origen 13n10, 36, 41n128, 88n172, 201n29
  Christology of 50n170, 143–4, 156, 203
  on Incarnation 114, 120
  Philocalia of Origen 19, 112
  On Prayer 83n146
  Treatise on the Passover 184–5, 186–7, 188
  on the Word of God 12n4, 18n26
  writings of 15, 96n16
Orthodox Christian faith 1, 56, 62n31, 139n76
ousia 93, 125n7, 195n1

paganism and pagans 33–4, 126, 149
  culture of 15, 15n16, 16n18
  imagery in Gregory's poetry 81, 167
Papaioannou, Stratis 60n22
paradeigmata 44, 66
Paradise 107–8, 164n53, 201n25
  see also Garden of Eden; heaven
parathesis, see juxtaposition *(parathesis)*
Parmenides 78, 79
partitive exegesis, principle of 49
partnership *(koinōnia)* 112
Paschal mysteries 10, 157, 158–9, 181–91, 182n150, 184n160
  see also Jesus Christ, crucifixion of
patience 177–80, 192
Paton, W. R. 11n2
patristic period, *see* Cappadocian Fathers; Fathers, Church; Greece and Greeks, Church Fathers
Paul, Apostle 19, 124, 167, 218
  on baptism 168–9, 171n93
  on body-soul union 135–6
  on Christ 38, 91, 149, 215
  on death 92, 179n138
  as inspiration for Gregory's autobiography 64, 65–6
  on love 42, 106, 222
  ministry of 200, 201n29, 202, 203n40
  on redemption 41n126, 186
  sufferings of 41, 180
  union with Christ 32, 154, 163–4
Paul of Samosata, heresies of 137, 140
Pelagius of Laodicea 146n14
Pentecost 53, 192
perichoresis 97, 145
Peter, Apostle 31, 167, 172
Pharisees 87, 215
philanthropy *(philanthrōpia),* Christian 28, 43, 172
Philo of Alexandria 101–2, 103
philosophy
  Christian 13n7, 25, 28, 33
  Emperor Julian on 61–2
  rhetoric's tension with 26–35
philosophy, Gregory's
  in autobiography 62
  Greek influences on 33–4
  mixture language's basis in 95n13, 96–106
  on the Word 24–9, 53
Philostorgius 135, 162n45
Photinians and Photinus 137, 140
Photius 135
physis, Word of God as 69, 79, 93, 94, 114, 118
Pillars of Hercules 16
Pius V, Pope 2n3
Plato and Platonism 13, 28, 34, 98n27, 118, 163
  Gorgias 26
  Phaedrus 24n55, 85
  priesthood concept in 196, 200
  on soul-body union 103, 104, 117
Plotinus 102–3, 104, 118
Plutarch 101

pneuma 100, 101
Pneumatology, Gregory's 10, 191, 209
poetry
  concision in 19, 22
  didactic epic style 78–82, 86, 89
  soteriological function of 56–7
  see also Gregory of Nazianzus, writings, poems
poor people, care of 17–18, 28, 28n74, 108n81, 172, 207, 220–5
Porphyry 98n27, 103–4
Portmann, Franz Xavier 96n16, 98n27
prayers
  Bible 83–4
  Christian attitude toward 87–8
  of Gregory to Christ 55–6, 69, 71–2, 79, 82–9, 223n151
  Homer's 44, 87
  Solomon's 32
predication, double 48n163, 51n174
predominance, union of 116, 117n134, 120
  Aristotle's concept of 97, 101, 113
  Gregory's use of 144, 148
Prestige, George Leonard 195n1
priesthood 19n34, 27n66, 57, 77n111, 81, 168, 199n20
  Christological accent on 197, 208–9
  healing powers of 199, 201, 205
  pastoral functions of 57, 62n30, 145
  Plato's concept of 196, 200
  see also bishops; Gregory of Nazianzus, ministry of
Proclus of Constantinople 56n3, 173n107
prophets 113, 201n29
  Christ's difference from 118, 140
Proverbs, Book of 43
  see also under Bible, Old Testament verses
providence, divine 37–8, 78, 87, 174
Psalms, Book of 24, 34, 67n53, 79, 84
  see also under Bible, Old Testament verses
Pseudo-Athanasius, heresies of 137n63
Pseudo-Barnabas 83
Pseudo-Dionysius 187n178
Pulcheria, Empress 133
purification 52, 114
  of baptism 164, 166, 169, 173n107
  through Christ 159, 167, 195
  as priestly work 199, 223
  rhetoric of 3–4, 30–2
  through sufferings 74, 213
  through Word of God 24–6, 30–2, 34, 54, 92

Quasten, Johannes 2n2, 21–2

Rahner, Karl 198n17
Rapp, Claudia 196n7, 212n90
Raven, Charles E. 128, 147–8n118
redemption 186–7, 200, 201, 212, 215
  see also salvation, Gregory's theology of
repentance 141, 169, 214 *see also* sin
resurrection 184, 190–1
  Christ's 139, 143–4, 161, 198
  deification through 107, 110, 142, 155
  human body's 76n107, 109, 120, 143–4
  scriptural accounts of 182–3
revelation 142n94, 166
Revelation, Book of 183
  see also under Bible, New Testament verses
reverse proportion, thesis of 46n148
rhetoric 36, 41n128, 44, 63
  philosophy's tension with 26–35
  purification through 3–4, 30–2
rhetoric, Gregory's 15n15, 62, 228
  blending Christ and self 5–9
  Hellenic influences on 12n5, 33–4
  against heresies 48, 125–31
  on the Word 11, 13n10, 24–7, 29–35, 53
Richard, Marcel 136
Robertson, Jon M. 138n69
Roll, Susan K. 161–2n43
Romans, Book of 136n58
  see also under Bible, New Testament verses
Rome, bishops of 126–7n12
  see also Council of Rome (377)
Rousseau, Philip 195n3
Ruether, Rosemary 26
Russell, Norman 85n155, 179n138

Sabellians and Sabellius 42, 125n7, 127, 137, 138n67, 167
sacraments 30, 174, 177
  see also baptism; Eucharist
sacrifices 53–4, 173, 202
  Abraham's 187, 218
  Christ's 187n176, 188–9
salvation, Gregory's theology of 12n5, 32, 37, 41n126, 43, 45–52, 169n82, 170, 214
  crucifixion as instrument of 182, 187–8
  Gregory's personal 66–7, 92, 96, 128, 150–1, 155, 174, 190–1
  through Incarnation 23, 130–1
  mixture language applied to 10, 110–14, 161
  Nativity's significance for 163–4
  in poetry 56–7
  through Trinity 8–9, 52
  through Word of God 7, 35, 45, 54, 67, 167
  see also Jesus Christ, salvation through
Sardica, synodical letter of 137n63
Sasima, Gregory elected bishop of 73, 77n111, 124, 196n7, 209, 210
Satan, *see* devil, the

Saul (Old Testament) 23
Schmemann, Alexander 56
Schwartz, Eduard 3n14
Scripture 23, 149
  Gregory's use of 24, 35–45, 65–7, 179–80, 185–6, 199–200, 221n133
  models of priesthood in 202n31, 203–4
  Word of God in 45–54 *see also* Bible
serpent, symbolism of 81n135, 188
Severus of Antioch 95–6n14
Sheerin, Daniel 36n112
silence, Gregory's practice of 100n36, 187–8, 197–8
  see also contemplation
Simelidis, Christos 214n99
sin 91, 109, 167–8
  Christ's freedom from 41, 48, 51, 115, 116
  crucifixion as redemption for 92, 165, 181–2
  human's susceptibility to 25, 111, 166
  original 107–8, 110, 116, 128, 186, 189
  purification from 74, 166, 169, 223
  repentance for 141, 169, 214
Socrates 28
Solomon (Old Testament), prayer of 32
Son of God 47n154, 64, 83n142, 85n155, 93n6, 138, 147
  Father's relationship to 19–20, 49–50, 68, 69, 88, 91, 92, 125n7, 132
  Gregory on 47–50, 108n83
  Incarnation of 112, 115n125
  see also Father (God); Jesus Christ; two Sons, heresy of
Sorabji, Richard 97
soteriology, Gregory's, *see* salvation, Gregory's theology of
soul, human 84, 85, 124
  body's union with 95–6, 99, 101, 103–10, 114–17, 120, 132, 135–8
  Christ's presence in 3, 57, 157
  Gregory's understanding of 22–3, 63, 69
speech, *see* rhetoric, Gregory's
Špidlík, Tomáš 221–2n137
Spoerl, Kelley McCarthy 135n54, 136, 137–8, 140n79
Stephen, stoning of 180
Stobeaus 99, 100
Stoicism and Stoics 12n4, 13, 60–1
  mixture concept of 4, 9, 96, 99, 100, 102, 120
  on soul-body union 97, 103–4
Storin, Bradley K. 14–15n14, 197n11, 198n16
subordinatism and subordinationists 126
Sykes, D. A. 37n114
Symeon, as "the New Theologian" 2n6
synchysis, see fusion *(synchysis)*
synkrasis, see intermingling *(synkrasis)*
synthesis, see composition *(synthesis)*
Syria, baptismal rite in 173n107
Szymusiak-Affholder, Carmen-Marie 72n81

Taft, Robert F. 157, 158–9
Themistius 60
Theodore of Mopsuestia 95–6n14
Theodore of Tyana 29, 177–8
Theodosius, Emperor 40, 126, 139n76, 162, 210
Theodotus of Byzantium 142
Theognis, erotic verses of 214n99
"Theologian, the," Gregory of Nazianzus known as 2–3, 4
"Theologian, the New," Symeon known as 2n6
theology
  Hellenic 147–8n118
  of mimesis 159–61
  of silence 187–8 *see also* Incarnation, Gregory's theology of; salvation, Gregory's theology of; Trinity, Gregory's theology of; Word of God, Gregory's theology of
Theophany, feast of 163–6, 182n150
Theophilus, Gregory's letter to 145n106
theōsis 8n30, 62, 93n5, 171n96
Theotokos, *see* Mary, Virgin, as Theotokos
Thomas, Apostle 130, 141, 173
Thomas Aquinas 94n8
thought-worlds 15n16
Three Holy Hierarchs 2 *see also* Basil of Caesarea (brother of Gregory of Nyssa); Gregory of Nazianzus; John Chrysostom
Tillemont 190n193
Timothy Aelurus 189n189
Timothy of Alexandria 126–7n12
Todd, Robert B. 100
Tome to the Antiochenes 138–9, 140–1, 146
transformation 67n53, 101, 110, 120, 157, 162, 173
Trinity, Gregory's theology of 2, 4, 12n5, 25n58, 32, 89, 96–7n18, 156
  Apollinarian heresy regarding 149–50
  Cappadocian Fathers on 195n1, 202n31
  Christian life in 23, 42, 126–7n12
  Christological aspects of 14–15n14, 58n12, 141, 169, 179, 216
  Nicene faith in 206n53, 206n54
  prayer to 88, 166
  salvation through 8–9, 52
  Scriptural basis 45–52
  three persons in 68, 83n142, 149–50, 191–2n196, 191–3, 201–2

Trinity, Gregory's theology of (*cont.*)
unity of 20, 125n7, 136, 167, 192, 201–2
Word's relationship to 43–54
see also Father (God); God; Holy Spirit; Jesus Christ; Son of God
two gates, symbolism of *(De rebus suis)* 80, 85
two Sons, heresy of 70, 118, 127, 129, 131, 135–9, 142

understanding 23, 62, 111–12
union *(henōsis)* 112
unity 4, 99, 108n81
in mixture 117–19, 136 *see also* oneness
Uzzah (Old Testament) 31

Vaccaro, Jody Lyn 154n4
Vaggione, Richard Paul 162n45
Valens, Emperor, Basil's encounter with 207
Valentinus, heresy of 133, 134
Van Dam, Raymond 59–60, 67n55, 227n2
on Gregory 57–8n10, 58–9, 78
Vergil, *Georgics* 78
Vinson, Martha 100n36
virginity 40, 109, 111, 213–19, 225
Virgin Mary, *see* Mary, Virgin
virtues 167, 205n48, 221, 225
Vitalius 134n51

wealth 220–4, 225
White, Carolinne 68n61
Wickham, Lionel 128
Widok, Norbert 163n50, 164n56
Wilken, Robert Louis 7n28
Williams, Michael Stuart 65
Winslow, Donald F. 47, 84n151, 85n157, 171n96, 182, 187n176, 221–2n137
Wolfson, Harry Austryn 97–8, 99n31, 117n124, 120
women 215, 216–17n112
see also Eve; Mary (at the tomb); Mary, Virgin, as Theotokos
Word of God, Gregory's theology of 11–54, 120, 141, 162–3, 167, 192n201, 205, 228
atonement for original sin 108
Biblical sources 35–45
as bread of angels 207
Christology of 9, 45–53, 64
classical style of 14–24
creation's connection to 51, 107, 110
enfleshment 6, 18, 45, 54, 64, 149, 163, 187, 189
Gregory as herald of 42, 66, 163, 166, 168, 178, 224, 225
Gregory's life mingled with 37–9, 89, 92–3, 95–6
healing through 88, 146–7
heresies regarding 138n67
in his writings 16–18, 18–21, 21–4, 221
human nature in 7–8, 105, 114, 135, 146–7
imitating 222–3
Incarnation of 1, 54, 61, 71, 91
mixture language applied to 24–5, 91, 115, 117–19, 132
overshadowing mind of man 85
participation with 14, 25, 29–30, 188–9, 203, 204
through philosophy 24–9
as *physis* 69, 79, 93, 94, 114, 118
proclamation of life 35–45
purification through 24–6, 30–2, 34, 54, 92
rational soul in 147, 149, 157
through rhetoric 24–7, 29–35
salvation through 35, 45, 54, 67, 187
in Scripture 45–54
titles of 51–2
Trinity relationship to 45–54
in writings of Gregory 18–21
see also Christology, Gregory's autobiographical; Incarnation, Gregory's theology of; Jesus Christ
words, good, purification through 30–2, 34
see also purification

Young, Frances 36–7, 43n132, 154, 179, 183n153

Zacchaeus (New Testament) 31–2, 167